4.

THE DEBATE ON A *MOTION* FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE, IN THE *HOUSE OF COMMONS*, ON MONDAY THE SECOND OF APRIL, 1792,

REPORTED IN DETAIL.

TABLE OF REFERENCE.

		Page
Mr. WILBERFORCE	Yorkſhire,	1—63
Mr. BAILLIE	Horſham	42
Mr. VAUGHAN	Caln, Wilts	56—72—93
Mr. H. THORNTON	Southwark	64—73
Col. TARLETON	Liverpool	73
Mr. M. MONTAGU	Tregony	83
Mr. WHITBREAD	Bedford	89
Mr. MILBANK	Durham County	93
Mr. DUNDAS	Edinburgh	94—97—127
Mr. FOX	Weſtminſter	96—106
Mr. ADDINGTON	Devizes	102—126
Mr. JENKINSON	Rye	127
Mr. ESTE	Great Bedwin	137
Mr. PITT	Cambridge Univerſity	142

THE

DEBATE

ON A

MOTION

FOR THE

ABOLITION

OF THE

SLAVE TRADE, &c.

On Monday the 2d of April, 1792.

A GREAT number of PETITIONS* were preſented, praying for the ABOLITION of the SLAVE TRADE.

The Right Honourable H. DUNDAS preſented one from the Inhabitants of the City of Edinburgh, and SIR WATKIN LEWES one from the Livery of London in Common Hall aſſembled.—Referred to the Committee on the Slave Trade.

Mr. WILBERFORCE moved that all the Evidence given on this Trade be referred to the Committee.—Ordered.

He then moved the Order of the Day, which was "for "the Houſe to reſolve itſelf into a Committee of the whole "Houſe, to conſider of the circumſtances of the African "Slave Trade."

The Houſe reſolved itſelf into a Committee accordingly, SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN in the Chair:

* The whole number of Petitions preſented to this Day, was Five Hundred and Eight.

Mr. Wilberforce.—In entering on the great buſineſs of this day, a buſineſs in itſelf of the firſt importance, and which, after having ſo long occupied the minds of men, is at this moment the ſubject of univerſal expectation and ſolicitude, it is natural to imagine that I muſt feel no ſmall degree of diffidence and apprehenſion. It is, however, a ſatisfaction to me to reflect, that it will not be neceſſary for me to take up ſo much of the time of the Houſe, as I have felt myſelf compelled to do on former occaſions; for beſides that I might well be content to leave the taſk of enforcing the propoſition I ſhall bring forward, to the greater abilities and more powerful eloquence of thoſe by whom I have the honour to be ſupported, the whole of this ſubject has been already ſo thoroughly inveſtigated; every part of it has been ſo canvaſſed and ſcrutinized, that it may be ſufficient for me now merely to refer you to our paſt diſcuſſions, and to ſpare the Houſe and myſelf the pain of a laborious and minute detail.

I have before had occaſion to remark, that nothing has tended more to prevent the impartial and candid conſideration of our arguments, than the indiſcriminate cenſures which may have ſometimes been really caſt on the whole body of Weſt Indians. There may have been thoſe who, ſuffering their paſſions to hurry them to haſty and immature concluſions, have connected with the evils of the ſyſtem, the perſonal character of every individual embarked in it, as being cloſely and inſeparably aſſociated; the charge raſhly brought has been indignantly repelled; heat and acrimony have prevailed on both ſides, reproaches and invectives have been mutually retorted, parties have been formed with all their conſequent effects of prejudice and bitterneſs, the Weſt Indians in this ſtate of things have grown incapable of liſtening diſpaſſionately to the voice of reaſon, and many perhaps of the very beſt and moſt benevolent amongſt them have been the moſt warm, becauſe moſt conſcious of the injuſtice of the accuſations they deemed caſt on them, and reſenting and ſpurning at them with emotions of honeſt diſdain.

The Houſe will do me the juſtice to recollect, whatever may have been ſaid to the contrary, that this is a language I have never held, nor have I been kept from it by motives of decorum or of perſonal civility; it is a language to which in my heart I have never aſſented, and which has always appeared to me

me not only injudicious and impolitic, but contrary to truth and juſtice, and to what abundant experience has taught us of the nature of the human mind: and I the rather make this declaration at the outſet of my ſpeech, in order, that if in the courſe of what I ſhall ſay on a ſubject which cannot but excite the ſtrongeſt emotions in any man who is not dead to the feelings of his nature, any over-warm or too general expreſſions ſhould eſcape me, it may be underſtood what are the cool deliberate opinions of my mind. I wiſh to ſpeak the words of conciliation; I wiſh particularly to call on the Gentlemen of the Weſt Indies to accompany me in my progreſs; I call upon them to inveſtigate with me fully and fairly the various evils ariſing from the Slave Trade, and thoſe evils eſpecially, which belong to the Weſt Indies. If I can but bring them to do ſo, I am perſuaded we cannot differ in the reſult: I cannot but believe that they will acknowledge the defects of their own ſyſtem, and deplore the evils with which it ſo abounds; for Sir, though I have acknowledged that there are many Owners of Slaves of benevolent tempers and generous hearts, who would be glad to uſe their abſolute power for purpoſes of kindneſs and beneficence, yet this muſt not reconcile us to the ſyſtem of Weſt Indian ſlavery itſelf, pregnant as it is with great and innumerable miſeries. A Trajan and an Antoninus do not reconcile me to a deſpotic monarchy; we ſhould diſtinguiſh in theſe caſes between what belongs to the perſon and what belongs to the ſyſtem; we ſhould rejoice indeed in a ſplendid exception to the ordinary character of tyrants; but not allow ourſelves to be thereby ſeduced into an approbation of tyranny.

Yet even under a Trajan and an Antoninus the fatal effects of this ſyſtem were but too diſcernible, though more flagrant and palpable under a Nero and a Caligula. An impartial Weſt Indian, therefore, inſtead of being incenſed by the frankneſs of my inveſtigation, ſhould rather join me in it, and aſſiſt me in tracing the miſchiefs to their proper ſource; theſe will appear by no means greater than might be expected from conſidering the various circumſtances of the preſent caſe. It has been juſtly remarked, that ariſtocracy is a worſe form of government than monarchy, becauſe the people have been ſubject to many tyrants inſtead of one; but if this be true, what ſhall we ſay to the preſent caſe, where deſpotic

power is not the privilege of high birth, or of extraordinary eminence, or wealth, or talents, but where it is an article to be bought at market like any other commodity, by every man who has £40 in the world. There is often an elevation and liberality of mind produced by the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior rank and conſequence and authority, which ſerve in ſome degree to mitigate the fierceneſs of unreſtrained power, and counteract the evils of which it is naturally productive; but when it comes into the poſſeſſion of the baſe and the vulgar, the evils will then be felt in their fulleſt extent. The cauſes of this we will not ſtop to examine, but the truth itſelf is important, and it bears directly on the preſent queſtion. It ſuggeſts to us the wretched ſtate of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies, where they are often liable to the uncontrouled domination of men of all ranks, underſtandings, and tempers, often perhaps of the moſt ignorant and worthleſs, and meaneſt of the human race. This is no picture of the imagination, but the very ſentiment which the ſcene itſelf impreſſes on the mind of a judicious obſerver. Every man almoſt who can have a horſe here, might be poſſeſſed of a ſlave there. Who is there that conſiders this, but muſt expect to find ſcenes of wretchedneſs and cruelty, on which it is impoſſible to look, without indignation and ſhame?

But let us recollect, that this is not the whole of the preſent caſe; for of the more opulent and more liberal Weſt India proprietors, how many are there who are abſent from their own eſtates, reſiding in this country, or in other parts of Europe? They ſend acroſs the Atlantic, declarations and directions dictated by the humanity of their own minds: but the execution of theſe, muſt be left to perſons of a deſcription altogether different. This forms a very leading feature in the delineation of the preſent ſyſtem, and I wiſh every Gentleman to conſider it in its various bearings and relations. It is not I only that make this remark, or the friends of the Abolition of the Slave Trade; it was long ago ſtrongly inſiſted on by Mr. *Long*, the hiſtorian of Jamaica: he pointed out the abuſe; he ſpecified the many evils which flowed from it; he ſtated that the inſurrections had chiefly been found to break out among the Slaves of Abſentee proprietors; he regretted that often the Manager had an intereſt altogether diſtinct from that of the Owner; that it was frequently his

object

object to make large crops of ſugar, regardleſs of the cruelties to be exerciſed on the Slaves, or of the ruinous load of expence to be incurred, in purchaſing new Slaves, to replace ſuch as ſhould be worn out by exceſſive labour; and then at laſt, he concludes, they retreat like a rat from a houſe in flames, and go with the credit of large crops on their backs to another part of the iſland. The truth of theſe animadverſions has been confirmed by the poſitive teſtimony of many reſpectable witneſſes; they converſed on the ſpot with the Managers, and it was eaſily to be collected, nay, ſometimes it was frankly confeſſed that this was their main principle.

This alone would be ſufficient to ſhew that the orders of the Abſentee Planters, however good, will not be executed, and will be conſtantly operating to defeat the effects of their benevolence. But it would not be neceſſary to ſhew this diſtinction of *intereſt*; many cauſes concur to produce a difference of *feelings*: the very circumſtance of being diſtinguiſhed by their colour from the reſt of the community, prevents this poor people from calling forth the feelings of ſympathy: they are a marked ſpecies; they are looked upon as a different race of Beings, and are not conſidered as having a title to the ſame humanity and tenderneſs, which the worſt of men would allow to be the right of thoſe whom they acknowledge to be their fellow creatures. Conſider how in the caſe of minds originally tender, the feelings will be blunted by habit; reckon up all theſe various circumſtances and eſtimate their amount, and you will naturally conclude, that the ſituation of the Slaves in the Weſt Indies muſt indeed be deplorable.

I ſhall not here detail the particulars of their ſtate, having done it ſo minutely on a former occaſion: I then proved my aſſertions by the poſitive teſtimony of our own witneſſes; by various circumſtances and conſiderations ariſing out of the very nature of the caſe, or ſuggeſted by ſcrutinizing and laying together different aſſertions from our Opponents. I then ſpecified many general evils reſulting from the nature of the ſyſtem, and ſhewed its tendency to render the ſtate of the Slave to be lamented in what regards his food, cloathing, lodging &c. Legal protection I ſhewed he had none, and ſhould be again ready to bring indiſputable proof of the aſſertion, if it ſhould be denied; but I would gladly ſpare myſelf the painful

 recital.

recital. I willingly paſs over the detail of all thoſe circumſtances of degradation to which they are ſubjected, their being worked in the fields *under the whip like cattle*, inſtead of being treated like moral agents, capable of forecaſt and reflection; their being often *branded*; their being excepted out of the ſyſtem of decency, and a thouſand other diſgraceful and humiliating particulars. Surely I muſt believe, when all theſe things are conſidered, that the gentlemen of the Weſt Indies themſelves will eagerly join with us in endeavouring to do away theſe grievances, and put an end to miſeries ſo complicated and intolerable. I will do them the juſtice to believe that they have looked after a remedy, but they have looked in vain; they have not found it; nor will they ever find it but in the Propoſition which I bring forward. I deliver it as my decided opinion, the reſult of a careful inveſtigation of the whole of this great ſubject, that the only practicable remedy is *ſtopping the further importation of Slaves from Africa*.

What other remedy has been ſuggeſted? Colonial regulations? Into this ſubject I went at large when the Queſtion of Abolition was laſt before the Houſe, and I could now only repeat the arguments I urged on that occaſion: the hinge on which it all turned was the *inadmiſſibility of Negro evidence*; the effects of this have been frankly avowed by many of our opponents themſelves, and are indeed ſo obvious as to render it ſuperfluous to inſiſt on them. What would be the ſituation of the bulk of the people in this country if Gentlemen of £500 per annum were alone admitted as witneſſes? But the caſe in the Weſt Indies is much worſe: for where, two or three White Men being on a plantation, it might be hoped that one would come forward againſt the other, (provided the perpetrator of any enormity had been ſo imprudent as to commit it in his preſence, inſtead of taking the opportunity of his being out of the way) he would be kept back by a thouſand conſiderations of mutual connivance, of ſimilarity of ſituation, of intimate connection—They are fellow-managers, brother-overſeers, whom even the *eſprit du corps* would prevent from undertaking ſo invidious an office, as that of criminating each other.

But colonial regulations, if futile and ineffectual for the protection of the Slave, would, if carried into execution, be abundantly operative in another direction. If you were to

give

give them the protection of laws, not nominally but really, not the ſhadow but the ſubſtance of Civil Rights, you would waken in their minds a conſciouſneſs of freedom which would only turn alike to their ruin and that of their maſters. It is in vain to attempt to reconcile impoſſibilities, freedom and ſlavery cannot be made to coaleſce: inſtead of being ſatisfied with what ſhould be granted, they would only more feel the want of what ſhould be with-held; the privileges which ſhould be extended to them would only ſerve to render the galling and ignominious diſtinctions under which they ſhould ſtill be kept more irritating and vexatious; inſurrections would too ſoon follow, and the whole reſult in one ſcene of ſlaughter and confuſion. Look to the hiſtory of paſt inſurrections, and you will find theſe aſſertions confirmed by actual experience. Let Gentlemen recollect the immenſe diſproportion of the Blacks and Whites in our Iſlands, and conſider it in conjunction with the poſitions I have been laying down, and it is impoſſible we can differ in the concluſion: but if ſuch is their preſent wretched and degraded ſtate, ſurely there is no man who muſt not long for that happy moment when they can be reſcued from it without danger:—a danger which I grant ſubſiſts, and renders their ſtate of degradation almoſt as neceſſary for their own as for their maſter's comfort and ſecurity; but whence does this ariſe? From the conſtant influx of ſlaves from Africa; who, torn from their homes for ever, reſenting the wrongs they have ſuffered; looking on their maſters and on all around them not as friends and protectors, but as enemies and tyrants, are ever ready to riſe and wreak their vengeance on their injurious oppreſſors.

This was acknowledged long before I brought forward the Queſtion of Abolition; Mr. Long has argued at great length on the danger of importing ſuch numbers of Africans: "27,000 ſlaves imported in 2 years, and our importations are now ſtill greater, are alone ſufficient to account for mutinies, inſurrections, &c." and the rebellions in 1765 and 6 he ſtates to have been occaſioned by the imported natives of the Gold Coaſt. This is not only Mr. Long's doctrine, but that of every reaſonable and obſerving man. I met with a curious proof of it the other day in a pamphlet, lately publiſhed in Carolina by a planter, who was endeavouring, not apparently actuated by motives of juſtice and humanity, but of policy, to continue the prohibi-

tion of African Slaves, which had already ſubſiſted for ſome years. He urges various arguments, but that on which he chiefly inſiſts is the danger of an inſurrection; he reminds his countrymen of a former rebellion in South Carolina, occaſioned by the riſing of the Angola Slaves, thence vulgarly called the *Gulla war*; he points to the iſland of *St. Domingo*, where, ſays he, you have a ſtriking exemplification of the truth of my poſition.

And this leads me, Sir, to ſay a few words on the late unhappy tranſactions in that unfortunate Iſland; I ſhall not, however, go at large into them at preſent, but muſt reſerve to myſelf the right of doing ſo, if it ſhould be rendered neceſſary by any thing urged in the courſe of the debate. I felt it my duty to inveſtigate the cauſes of the diſturbances in queſtion, and I do declare myſelf decidedly convinced, and will enter if required into proof of the aſſertion, that they did not ariſe from any attempts to aboliſh the Slave Trade, or from the efforts of Societies eſtabliſhed in France for that purpoſe. The caſe was ſimply this: the free people of colour, though the privileges of citizens were beſtowed on them by law a century ago, had never in fact been admitted to the enjoyment of them, but had been treated, though many of them men of property and of education, as beings of an inferior order; the animoſities had almoſt grown to their height, and had nearly broken out into actual hoſtilities before the period of the French Revolution. What paſſed then and ſince, the violence with which the white inhabitants of the Iſland aſſerted their own rights, whilſt with equal warmth they were denying them to the men of colour; agreements in the Iſland made and broken, as convenience ſuggeſted; the contradictory decrees of the National Aſſembly, ſometimes granting the deſired immunities, ſometimes retracting the grants, and thus trifling with their feelings, and working them up into a rage too big to be ſuppreſſed, will ſufficiently account for. What wonder if the ferment occaſioned by all theſe circumſtances, and the favourable opportunity afforded by theſe diviſions in which their maſters were occupied, produced a general riſing of the ſlaves, who had rebelled before in conjunctures leſs ſuited to their purpoſe? They did riſe, and dreadful was the conſequence. No man, I am ſure, deplores more than myſelf thoſe cruel and humiliating tranſactions, and I make this very Motion becauſe I deplore

deplore them, and would in our own Iſlands prevent the repetition. Conſider the immenſe diſproportion of numbers; there are now in Jamaica near 300,000 ſlaves, and but about 20,000 whites of all ages and deſcriptions: We are every year importing into that Iſland a greater ſtrength of blacks than there is of whites to be oppoſed to them. Where is this to ſtop? Do you ſeriouſly mean to continue this ſyſtem? I ſhould really have thought the Weſt India Gentlemen would themſelves have implored us, if we had entertained no ſuch deſign, to arreſt the further progreſs of this growing and pernicious malady.—Thus, Sir, were the SAFETY of the Iſlands only in queſtion, you could not but agree to my propoſition.

But I muſt recur to what I before laid down, that theſe importations do not tend more to produce confuſion and diſorder than to retain the unhappy ſlaves themſelves in their actual ſtate of wretchedneſs and degradation. It is this that would even render it unſafe to puniſh white men for the ill treatment of their ſlaves, except very rarely and in the moſt atrocious inſtances. But ſurely, Sir, we cannot bear to leave theſe poor creatures thus ſunk below the level of their ſpecies; and I am perſuaded the Weſt India Gentlemen themſelves would be glad to afford them relief: they would be glad, I truſt, to put them under the protection of laws, but this muſt be done rationally and ſoberly. After what I have ſaid, I am not afraid of being told I deſign to emancipate the ſlaves: I will not indeed deny that I wiſh to impart to them the bleſſings of freedom; who is there that knows their value, but muſt join with me in this deſire? But the freedom I mean is that of which, at preſent, they, alas! are not capable. True Liberty is the child of Reaſon and of Order; it is indeed a plant of celeſtial growth, but the ſoil muſt be prepared for its reception: he that would ſee it flouriſh, and bring forth its proper fruits, muſt not think it ſufficient to let it ſhoot as it will in unreſtrained licentiouſneſs:

> Luxuriantia compeſcet, nimis aſpera ſano
> Lævabit cultu, virtute carentia tollet.

Would you then impart to them theſe ineſtimable benefits, take away that cauſe which at preſent obſtructs their introduction.

Nor would the good effects of ſtopping the importations be

be confined to the ſlaves, nor would the ſafety of the Iſlands only be thereby promoted, it would tend to the planter's benefit in another view: by the facility of purchaſing African ſlaves he is often drawn into freſh expences, he is ultimately plunged into inextricable embarraſsments, and wiſhes at length that this Channel of Supply had been ſhut up from him. This evil alſo was inſiſted on by Mr. Long, the Hiſtorian of Jamaica, who actually propoſed a temporary prohibition of the importation of African ſlaves with a view to its prevention. I hope it will not be deemed invidious that I ſo often quote the work of this Gentleman, but rather a proof of the reſpect I pay to its authority, and I appeal to it the more willingly, becauſe it was written long before the Abolition of the Slave Trade had become the ſubject of public diſcuſſion.

But I frankly acknowledge that the conſideration of the planter's benefit, from ſtopping the importations, does not intereſt me in any degree ſo much as that to be thence derived by the unhappy ſlaves. Loſing by degrees the painful recollection of their native and early connections; conceiving new attachments to their dwelling places, to their families, to their maſters, they would gradually riſe in the ſcale of beings; no longer ready on every occaſion to ſtart into inſurrections, they would ceaſe to be the continual objects of the planter's jealouſy and ſuſpicion; it would be no longer neceſſary for the general ſafety to extinguiſh in them the principle of moral agency; they would feel more reſpectable in themſelves and be more reſpected by others; and by degrees, the harſhneſs of their preſent bondage being transformed into the mildneſs of patriarchal ſervitude, they would become capable of ſtill greater bleſſings and more ennobling privileges: and Gentlemen will obſerve it is the peculiar merit of this Plan, that though its full effects cannot be produced at once, we are all the while tending to their complete enjoyment, with a uniform and uninterrupted courſe. The ſlaves will daily grow happier, the Iſlands ſafer, the planters richer; the whole will be like the progreſs of vegetation, the effects are not at firſt perceptible, but the great principle, operating in ten thouſand ways, will gradually change the whole face of things, and ſubſtitute fertility and beauty in the place of barrenneſs and deſolation. Who is there that contemplates this delightful proſpect, but muſt ardently long to have

have it realized? It is, I am perſuaded, our common wiſh, our univerſal, our impatient expectation.

But it was formerly urged that this was a remedy which, however deſirable in itſelf, the Iſlands were not as yet in a ſtate to admit. It was contended that they could not keep up their numbers without farther importations from Africa; that were theſe ſtopped, their gangs would continually be growing weaker and weaker, until at length their eſtates ſhould be thrown wholly out of cultivation. When the queſtion of Abolition was laſt before the Houſe, I went into this ſubject ſo much at large, that I need only now advert to what I then urged: if it be thought neceſſary I ſhall repeat and confirm it. It was then made out by my Right Honourable Friend with his uſual accuracy, and that too from documents furniſhed by our opponents themſelves, that the Iſlands were actually keeping up their Stocks of Slaves. His calculations, ſo far from being refuted, have not, that I know of, even been denied; and the fact was confirmed by the poſitive teſtimony of a Gentleman of great experience examined in the Iſland of Jamaica. I ſhewed you that it had taken place under every poſſible circumſtance of diſadvantage; that the various evils under which the ſlaves laboured, and above all the general inattention to the breeding ſyſtem, would have led us to expect a great decreaſe; but that in ſpite of them all, great and numerous as they were, an increaſe having begun to take place, we were warranted in believing that the amendment of one or two particulars out of many, would alone be ſufficient to render the increaſe rapid; and we found that Negroes had actually increaſed conſiderably in various countries, and climates, and ſituations, many of them extremely ill adapted to their conſtitutions. I pointed out alſo many modes whereby, if it ſhould be deemed neceſſary, the chaſm could be filled up which ſome might think would be occaſioned by immediate abolition: a great ſupply of hands might be obtained by turning into the field ſome of the ſuperfluous domeſtics, with whoſe immenſe number every Gentleman who knew any thing of the Weſt Indies was perfectly acquainted. Improvements in machinery were ſuggeſted; the transfer of the lands from ſugar to cotton, which requiring fewer hands would let looſe a number of labourers for other purpoſes: theſe and other modes were propoſed, whereby

whereby the quantity of laborious industry might receive supplies. But what above all other circumstances I must now insist on, is this: that five years importations have since taken place; had there therefore been any small error in the calculations of my Right Honourable Friend, or had I strained my subsidiary arguments a little too far, it is impossible to deny but that this must now be more than rectified, and that the Islands are at length in a state to suffer not even a temporary inconvenience from the admission of this salutary expedient. If therefore you have any regard for the happiness of the slaves, or for the safety of the Islands; nay if you are even dead to these powerful incentives, and were alive only to considerations of the planters interest, you could not but consent to the measure I recommend to you, of *stopping the further importation of African Slaves.*

And now, Sir, abstaining for a while from those topics, which I confess are after all the nearest to my heart, I will slightly touch on what were originally said to be other disadvantages that would follow from the Abolition. I wish to add up every possible item before I proceed to place any thing on the opposite side of the account: by this mode it will more plainly appear how much the balance is in my favour. It was originally urged that the African trade was a nursery for seamen, and that its abolition would therefore be highly injurious to our naval strength. This part of the subject was very early taken up by a Gentleman whose services in the whole of this great cause can never be over-rated. I need hardly say I allude to Mr. Clarkson. He asserted, as the result of a long and laborious inquiry, that of the sailors employed in the African trade between a fifth and a sixth actually died, and that they seldom brought home more than half of their original crews. Nothing was more vehemently repelled or more obstinately resisted than these positions, till at length having long borne with these clamorous contradictions, we moved last year for the muster rolls, documents prepared by our opponents themselves, and kept in their possession, and which cannot therefore be supposed to have been fabricated to serve our purpose. From these Mr. Clarkson's calculations were fully justified: it appeared that of 12,263 persons, the number of the original crews, there had died 2,643, the average length of their voyages being twelve months; whilst

whilſt on the contrary in the Weſt India trade, in which the length of the voyage was ſeven months, of 7,640, the number of the original crews, there had died only 118. But the loſs by deaths was not the whole loſs to the country; for, beſides the broken conſtitutions of the ſurvivors, which rendered many of them for the reſt of their lives incapable of the duties of their profeſſion, ſo many left their ſhips in conſequence of ill uſage, that they ſeldom brought home more than half of the perſons they had taken out. This laſt circumſtance was attempted to be accounted for, from the natural capriciouſneſs of ſailors; and it was ſaid that they ran away in as great number from the Weſt India as from the Guinea ſhips. The direct contrary appeared from the muſter rolls, and this too, though, from the different ways of paying them in the two trades, their forfeiting little or nothing by quitting the Weſt India men, but much by quitting the Guinea men, the reverſe might be naturally expected.

I could ſay much more on this ſubject, and in particular I could open to you ſuch ſcenes of cruelty to theſe unhappy men, as muſt excite at once the concern and indignation of every man who feels for that maſs of his fellow citizens to which this nation owes ſo much of her ſafety and of her honour. But I will abſtain from this painful detail, and only repeat what I juſt now obſerved, that in the outſet of this buſineſs nothing was more obſtinately denied than our *now* no longer controverted aſſertions concerning the loſs of ſeamen.—This may ſerve to procure us credit on thoſe points which are ſtill in diſpute, and prove that it is not neceſſary for our opponents to be correct in order to be poſitive.

I will but juſt touch on the effects of immediate Abolition on our general policy, on our commerce and manufactures, and on the proſperity of the places whence the Slave Trade is chiefly carried on. We have ſeen from the accounts upon your table how ſmall a part it conſtitutes of the trade of Briſtol and of Liverpool; and that it has become leſs profitable of late, cannot be denied by thoſe Gentlemen who aſſerted that the regulations actually introduced would make it a loſing concern: for though it were ſaid that in the heat of oppoſition they might have puſhed their aſſertions a little too far, yet it will be hardly allowed them at one moment to ſpeak of an actual loſs, and at another of an actual gain ſo great

great that it would ruin thoſe opulent towns to be deprived of it. After the ſtatements we have lately heard of the public finances and our immenſe exportations of Britiſh manufactures, who is there that will inſiſt much on our exportations to Africa to the amount of about 400,000l. or who that will not admit we might ſoon eſtabliſh a commerce with that country more beneficial and more innocent, were we to put a ſtop to this inhuman traffick in the fleſh and blood of our fellow creatures?

Nor can it even be urged that the *immediate* Abolition of the Slave Trade would in this view be productive of conſiderable preſent inconvenience. Conſider what happens both at the commencement and cloſe of every war; how in the former caſe the exiſting channels for the conveyance of our manufactures are ſuddenly barred up. The ſyſtem of political œconomy is of ſo complicated a nature, that in innumerable inſtances we find the effect of the evils we had apprehended prevented by means, of which before we had no actual aſcertainment or diſtinct perception. I remember it is obſerved by Mr. Adam Smith, in his incomparable Treatiſe on the Wealth of Nations, that at the concluſion of every war more than 100,000 ſoldiers and ſailors are at once diſcharged; and we ſee no alteration in the wages of labour, or in any other particular which the ſudden influx might be expected to affect.

As to another branch of national policy, that I mean which concerns the extenſion of our cultivation in the Weſt India Iſlands, I will ſay nothing at preſent. From our evidence it abundantly appears, that the opening of new plantations with imported Africans is a ſyſtem the moſt ruinous to the individuals concerned; and the intelligent reaſonings of Mr. Irvine muſt have convinced the Houſe that if this extenſion of cultivation be conſidered only in a national view, it is by no means to be deſired by any real well-wiſher to the ſecure and abiding proſperity of this country.—Thus, Sir, it appears that, leaving Africa wholly out of the queſtion, Juſtice and Humanity would dictate to us the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the ſtrongeſt terms, as the only ſure expedient for bringing the ſlaves into that ſtate of comfort wherein it muſt be our common wiſh to ſee them placed; that in the Abolition alone

alone can the Iſlands find ſecurity, and that this meaſure is enforced on us by the principles of ſound policy, and a regard to the political intereſts of the Britiſh empire.

But, Sir, though I have ſuffered myſelf to dwell ſo long on theſe conſiderations, I now proceed to that part of the ſubject which indeed moſt intereſts my heart. LOOK TO THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA, and there you will behold ſuch a ſcene of horrors as no tongue can expreſs, no imagination can repreſent to itſelf. The effects of this inhuman commerce are indeed ſuch that we lend our aſſent to them reluctantly: yet they are proved ſo clearly, that it is not poſſible for any man to doubt of their reality; and were poſitive teſtimony defective, the reaſon of the thing would have rendered it altogether unneceſſary. How can it but follow, from our going to that country, and offering our commodities to the petty Chieftains for the bodies of their ſubjects, but that they will not be very nice in the means they take to procure the articles, by the ſale of which they are to ſupply themſelves with the gratifications of appetites which we have diligently and but too ſucceſsfully taught them to indulge.

One mode they take is that of committing *depredations upon each other's territories*; and the very nature and character of wars in Africa is ſuch as might have been expected from the great motive from which they originate: they are a ſort of predatory expeditions, of which the chief object is the acquiſition of Slaves;—not but that, as it is natural to imagine, theſe often prove the occaſion of more general and continual hoſtilities, inaſmuch as they greatly add to the cauſes of diſſention between neighbouring communities.—When on a former occaſion I urged ſomewhat to this effect, I remember the direct contrary was aſſerted, and in direct defiance of reaſon and common ſenſe it was ſaid, that wars had never been cauſed by the Slave Trade. I repeated my reaſoning, and urged that it was not to be expected that I could be able to adduce ſpecific inſtances in a country where letters were unknown, and the very exiſtence, as well as the cauſes, of paſt events, muſt in general be ſoon forgotten.—Again, I was challenged to produce a ſingle inſtance; the natural barbarity of theſe people was deſcanted on as being alone ſufficient to render Africa a ſcene of general carnage; and in particular the cruelties of a certain King of Dahomey were

were enlarged on, and the dreadful ſlaughter which attended his invaſion of a neighbouring kingdom. To ſay nothing of the unfairneſs of extending to the whole of that vaſt diſtrict from which we collect ſlaves, what at the utmoſt was only proved of a ſingle kingdom, I muſt own I was a little ſhaken in my belief of the repreſentations of the ſtate of this very kingdom itſelf, when I heard it ſaid by another Gentleman, (who though not favourable to the cauſe to which I wiſhed well, gave his evidence with a frankneſs and fairneſs which did him great honour, I mean Mr. Devaynes,) that the Dahomans were a very happy people. But how was I aſtoniſhed, how did I admire the ſtrange coincidence, when I found in this very king of Dahomey, the very ſpecific inſtance that had been required of me; and that theſe very cruelties of his, in the conqueſt of Whydah, on which ſuch ſtreſs was laid, were committed by him in a war undertaken with the view of puniſhing the adjacent nation for having ſtolen away ſome of his ſubjects, for the purpoſe of ſelling them for Slaves. This curious anecdote was brought to my notice by a noble friend of mine, to whoſe friendſhip on this, as on many other occaſions, I am greatly indebted: in his valuable compilation * you will read the tranſaction at large; and the reflection is very remarkable which the conduct of the king of Dahomey, in this inſtance, extorted from an hiſtorian, who though himſelf concerned in the Slave Trade, ſeems not to have loſt all ſenſe of its enormity. "The king's actions carry great reputation, for by the deſtruction of this Trade, he relinquiſhed his own private intereſts for the ſake of publick juſtice and humanity; and I have a natural propenſity to wiſh the king of Dahomey well, ſince he has redeemed his countrymen from being ſold as Slaves."

But, Sir, the exciting of wars between neighbouring States is almoſt the lighteſt of the evils Africa is doomed to ſuffer from the Slave Trade: it is indeed one of the greateſt calamities to which we are liable in this more highly favoured quarter of the world, but it is a LUXURY in Africa. Still more intolerable are thoſe *acts of outrage which we are continually ſtimulating the Kings to commit on their own ſub-*

* Lord Muncaſter's Hiſtorical Sketches of the Slave Trade, and of its Effects in Africa, addreſſed to the People of Great Britain.

jects:

jects: theſe are ſtill leſs to be guarded againſt, and the cruelty of them is aggravated by the conſideration that they are committed by thoſe who, inſtead of the deſpoilers and ravagers, ought to have been the Guardians and Protectors of their people. A Chieftain is in want of European commodities, and being too weak or too timid to attack his neighbours, he ſends a party of ſoldiers by night to one of his own defenceleſs villages; they ſet fire to it, they ſeize the miſerable inhabitants as they are eſcaping from the flames, and hurry with them to the ſhips of the Chriſtian Traders, who, hovering like vultures over theſe ſcenes of carnage, are ever ready for their prey. Innumerable are the inſtances of this kind to be met with in the courſe of the evidence. Captain Wilſon, a gentleman of unqueſtionable veracity and honor, ſaw armed parties going out to ſcour the country for many ſucceſſive evenings. You have in the Evidence more detailed ſtories of this kind, which cannot but affect the hardeſt heart. We are told perpetually of villages half conſumed, and bearing every mark of recent deſtruction; and more than one of our witneſſes has been himſelf engaged in one of theſe very night expeditions I have mentioned. Nor do we learn theſe tranſactions only from our own witneſſes, but they are proved by the teſtimony of Slave Factors themſelves, whoſe works were written and publiſhed long before the preſent inquiry. But it is not only by the Chieftains that theſe diſorders are committed, (though even from their attacks poverty itſelf is no ſecurity) every one's hand is againſt his neighbour: whitherſoever a man goes, be it to the watering place, or to the field, or wherever elſe it may be, he is no where ſafe; he never can quit his houſe without fear of being carried off by fraud or force; and he dreads to come home again, leſt, on his return, he ſhould find his hut a heap of ruins, and his family torn away into perpetual exile. Diſtruſt and terror every where prevail, and the whole country is one continued ſcene of anarchy and deſolation.

But there is more yet behind! It might naturally have been imagined that no means of procuring Slaves would be left unreſorted to; and accordingly the inventive genius of man, ſtrained to the very utmoſt in this purſuit, has made *the adminiſtration of juſtice* itſelf a fertile ſource of ſupply to this inhuman traffick. Every crime is puniſhed by Slavery, and

falſe

falſe accuſations are perpetually brought in order to obtain the price for which the party convicted is to be ſold; ſometimes the judges have a conſiderable part of this very price, and univerſally fees on every trial. But it is needleſs to inſiſt on the acts of injuſtice which muſt hence ariſe: if with all that we have done by ſecuring the independence of judges, by the inſtitution of juries, and by all our other legal machinery, we have not done too much to ſecure the equitable adminiſtration of law in this civilized country, what muſt be the conſequence in Africa, where every man is ſtimulated to bring an action againſt his neighbour by the hope of obtaining part of the price for which he will ſell, and where he knows the Judge, who is to preſide, has himſelf an intereſt in the conviction. In corroboration of theſe reaſonings, we have again the teſtimony of the Hiſtorians of Africa; and we may trace the laws, which were originally mild, gradually growing more and more ſevere, in proportion to the predominance of the Slave Trade. Mr. Moore, an author of credit, and himſelf ſeven years Factor to the African Company, ſays, "Since this Trade has been uſed, all puniſhments are changed "into Slavery; there being an advantage in ſuch condemna-"tion, they ſtrain the crimes very hard, in order to get the "benefit of ſelling the criminal. Not only murder, theft, and "adultery are puniſhed by ſelling the criminal for a Slave, but "every trifling crime is puniſhed in the ſame manner." This, and many other inſtances of a ſimilar ſort, will be found in the compilation I already alluded to.

Nor do we leave it to the Natives of this devoted country to commit merely on each other theſe acts of depredation! Many are *the acts of violence perpetrated immediately by the Europeans themſelves*. Many, many are the inſtances of this kind recorded in the courſe of our voluminous Evidence; and if there had been any doubt of the exiſtence of ſuch practices, they have been confirmed paſt a doubt by ſome late tranſactions which, much as I wiſh to avoid detail, I feel it my duty briefly to relate to the Committee; the rather becauſe they are maſter-pieces in their kind, and furniſh a complete ſpecimen of the various enormities that attend this deteſted ſyſtem.

Some Gentlemen will perhaps recollect, that in the year 1789, I ſtated to the Houſe a curious incident that had paſſed in

in the neighbourhood of the River Cameroons, whence the Maſter of a Liverpool ſhip, of the name of Bibby, fraudulently carried off thirty-two relations of one of the Chiefs of the country, who had been put on board as pledges for goods. The enormity of the proceeding excited the utmoſt indignation in the Governor of one of our Weſt India Iſlands, who complained of the outrage in the ſtrongeſt terms, and ſpoke in the language of a man who expreſſed himſelf the more vehemently from having long ſmothered his indignation. Scarce had this ſcene paſſed at the Cameroons, when another ſucceeded of a nature ſtill more ſhocking. Early in the year 1790, the Captain of an Engliſh ſhip, which had long been lying in that River, having already diſpatched one cargo of Slaves, by an attendant veſſel, to the Weſt Indies, happening one day to ſend two or three men to get water, a Black Slave, who was along with them, was ſeized by a native Trader on the ground of the ſhip's owing him goods to the value of a Slave or two. It cannot be expected that the Captains of Slave Ships will be men of peculiar mildneſs in reſenting injuries: the revenge however of the Captain in this inſtance was really an effort of genius, and muſt appear ſomewhat ſingular to Gentlemen leſs acquainted than myſelf with the habits of the Slave Trade. In the evening he called up the healthy part of his crew on deck, and ordered them to ſtrip and blacken their bodies all over, putting a piece of cloth round their loins, that they might appear like the natives of the country. They ſhewed ſome backwardneſs; but being threatened to be ſhot through the head if they refuſed, they reluctantly complied. Thus accoutred, and being armed with muſquets and cutlaſſes, the Captain himſelf, blackened like the reſt, and breathing implacable revenge, led them forth, about midnight, to the execution of his purpoſe. They ſoon reached the dwelling of the unfortunate Trader: they fired upon his wretched family; three of his children were killed on the ſpot; the man and his wife were deſperately wounded; the former died as they were dragging him down to the boat, the latter half an hour after ſhe was on board the ſhip.—The ſtate of ſociety in Africa is ſuch as to produce univerſal watchfulneſs: the Trader had no ſooner heard the noiſe of a party of men at his door, than he beat his drum: this, with the report of the muſquets, alarmed the neighbourhood, and it

was with difficulty that the Captain and his party eſcaped to the ſhip, ſeveral of them being ſeverely wounded, and one afterwards dying of the injury he had received.

I do not know that there is any one part of this whole tranſaction more curious than what I am next to relate, or that tends to prove more indiſputably that ſuch ſcenes as I have been deſcribing are conſidered as common ordinary tranſactions. The Captain does not ſeem to have expected repriſals; his trade appears to have ſuffered no interruption, and he continued there for ſeveral weeks after in a ſtate of quiet and compoſure. But, Sir, Africans are men, and they have the feelings of men. All this while the fire was not extinct, it only ſlumbered, and was ſoon to break forth. In this part of the ſtory alſo there is much well worthy of notice. Several weeks afterwards, one of the Chieftains came on board to pay a friendly viſit, and borrow ſome cutlaſſes and muſquets, alleging the natural pretext, that he was going up into the country to make war, in order to get Slaves, and that the Captain ſhould have half of the booty. The requeſt was ſo reaſonable, that it could not be refuſed: any lurking ſuſpicion that might have been entertained of his viſit's being hoſtile was done away, and he was readily furniſhed with what he required: indeed it would have argued the Captain's being very inattentive to the intereſt of his employers if he had failed to comply with ſo reaſonable, ſo cuſtomary a requiſition. Now, Sir, I dare ſay, whatever credit Gentlemen may be diſpoſed to give me for the ground-work of the ſtory, they conceive theſe at leaſt are merely my own comments! But aſtoniſhing as it may ſeem, this is almoſt in terms the Captain's own account. So dead and callous does this trade render thoſe who are engaged in it to every ſentiment of perſonal danger and perſonal character; they have ſo forgotten the impreſſions ſuch tranſactions muſt once have produced in themſelves; and are ſo loſt to the ſenſe of the feelings they muſt ſtill excite in others, that the Captain himſelf, in a Proteſt he afterwards drew up on account of the loſs of the ſhip, ſtated, that the Chieftain came on board under pretence of borrowing ſome arms, as he was going up into the country to trade, and that he furniſhed him with muſquets and cutlaſſes, *having often lent him arms before.*

He ſeems not to apprehend it poſſible that any other blame could

could attach on him than that of an improvident expenditure of ſtores; and with all the ſolicitude of a man intent to preſerve his commercial character unimpeached, he is only anxious to exculpate himſelf from this imputation. Is it poſſible for any thing to furniſh a more ſtriking exemplification of the principles and nature and mode of conducting the Slave Trade? The Chieftain and his party perceiving the general ſtate of things favourable to their deſign, (all the healthy part of the crew being abſent on ſhore) and having thus put the Captain off his guard, ſuddenly ſeized him, and threw him overboard, hauled him into their canoe, and hurried him to land; where a party of the Natives, who had been lying in ambuſh for the purpoſe, immediately ſurpriſed that part of the crew I ſpoke of. You doubtleſs expect to be told that they were all forthwith murdered by theſe ſavage Africans: No ſuch thing; they only deſired the Captain to give them an order for goods on the veſſel, with which he was obliged to comply. Now then at leaſt you are prepared to hear that they proceeded to ſatiate their revenge; and if this might ſeem ſomething like bad faith, conſidering the ranſom had been paid, the Captain himſelf had ſet them the example: for on the night before he had ſallied forth in the execution of his bloody enterpriſe, he had drawn the black Chieftain on board by a friendly invitation, and had detained him as a pledge for his own ſafety. But, Sir, theſe barbarians are not yet ſo improved as ourſelves in cruelty and treachery: they ſet the Captain and his men free without injury, and ſent them back to tell the world how much the Natives of Africa come behind us in fraud, and outdo us in humanity and honour.

There is nothing more ſtriking to my own mind, (I do not know if it may produce the ſame impreſſion on the Committee) than the way in which this tranſaction came out. It was indeed on a trial in a Britiſh Court of Juſtice! But was it on a trial for piracy or murder?—No, Sir: on a mere civil ſuit, inſtituted for wages on the part of ſome of the poor ſeamen, who, ſick and diſabled, as I have before mentioned, (having been obliged to quit the ſhip, becauſe the Natives threatened to ſet fire to her, and put them to death after they had taken the Captain and healthy part of the crew,) were refuſed by the owners this wretched compenſation for all their danger and ſufferings. Glad am I to ſay they obtained a verdict. I beg

the Committee will bear in mind the whole of this tranſaction, which ſhews (if any thing can ſhew it) the dreadful nature of the Slave Trade; its cruelty, its perfidy, its effects on Africa, and on the minds of thoſe who carry it on. But that to which I particularly wiſh to point your attention, is the nature of the Chieftain's application coupled with the Captain's declaration that he had often given them fire-arms before: whence you may collect, that theſe ravages are cuſtomary things, the regular mode of doing buſineſs in the Slave Trade. Remember too, that theſe tranſactions were carrying on at the very time our inquiry was going forward, and whilſt our Opponents witneſſes were ſtrenuouſly denying not only the actual, but even the poſſible, exiſtence of any ſuch depredations.

There is however another inſtance yet behind, which in ſome reſpects ſurpaſſes in enormity even that I have juſt now ſtated. Gentlemen may perhaps recollect ſome inſtances in our Evidence wherein, when the Natives have perſiſted in aſking too much for their Slaves, a Captain has fired on their towns, and uſed other compulſory means to bring them down to more reaſonable terms. If a few lives ſhould be loſt in this mode of adjuſting the bargain, it does not much ſignify; human life is appreciated but at a low rate in Africa.

Now, Sir, it will aſtoniſh the Houſe to hear of a recent tranſaction of this ſort, exceeding all the former in magnitude and enormity. This happened no longer ago than laſt Auguſt, after all our arguments and diſcuſſions, when, if ever, you would think the Slave Captains would have been on their good behaviour. Six Britiſh ſhips, three belonging to Liverpool, three to Briſtol, were anchored off the Town of Calabar. Gentlemen will recollect the place,—it was the ſcene of a dreadful maſſacre about twenty years before. The Captains of theſe ſix veſſels thinking the Natives aſked too much for their Slaves, and having in vain endeavoured to prevail on them to moderate their conditions, held a conſultation how they ſhould proceed, and agreed to fire upon the town, unleſs their terms ſhould be complied with. They one evening notified their determination, and acquainted the Traders that if they ſhould continue obſtinate, they would put it in execution the next morning. *In this inſtance they kept their word.* They brought 66 guns to bear upon the Town, and fired on it for two or three hours; not a ſingle ſhot was returned.—

A canoe

A canoe then came off to offer terms of accommodation, ſtating that much execution had been done, which was indeed the leſs to be wondered, *becauſe the guns had been pointed by old men-of-war ſeamen*. How diſhonourable an exerciſe of their ſkill! The parties ſtill not agreeing, whilſt the poor people, taking advantage of this ceſſation, were ſeen on all ſides making their eſcape into the woods, or paddling off in their boats, ſome one way, ſome another, the firing recommenced; more damage was done, and the obſtinate Natives were at length forced into ſubmiſſion. There are no certain accounts of their loſs; report ſaid 50 were killed; but ſome were afterwards ſeen in the agonies of death, by thoſe who were ſent on ſhore to buy Slaves, and others were lying badly wounded. The affair however ended, as it ought; and I have no doubt we may have the ſatisfaction to think many of the Liverpool and Briſtol Owners are ſome hundred pounds the richer for this tranſaction. One circumſtance I muſt add, which I had before omitted, though for my Country's ſake I would gladly ſuppreſs it; and I recommend it in particular to the conſideration of thoſe who have urged it as an argument for our carrying on the Slave Trade, that it would be taken up by other nations if we were to deſiſt from it. A French ſhip was at the ſame time in the Calabar River, the Captain of which could not be prevailed on, by the Britiſh Captains, to join in their enterprize.—He bought at the high price; and they were obliged to ſuſpend their bloody purpoſe until he had ſailed away with his cargo. Sir, it ſhocks me more than all the reſt to be obliged to ſay, that I fear theſe matters are not altogether unknown at Briſtol; and yet I hear theſe very Captains are furniſhed with freſh births, as if they had raiſed their eſtimation by this inſtance of their activity. Yes, Sir, at this very moment, whilſt we are ſitting here, and talking of Abolition, in contempt of our debates, in defiance of our inquiries, nay, as if they thought hereby to recommend themſelves to the ſanction and countenance of a Britiſh Houſe of Commons.——Excuſe my warmth;—it is impoſſible for any one, who has the feelings of a man, not to loſe his temper in ſpeaking of ſuch proceedings. The Houſe being here clamorous for the names, Mr. W. ſtated them: The Thomas, of Briſtol, Capt. Phillips; Waſp, of ditto, Capt. Hutchenſon; Recovery, of ditto, Capt. Kimber; the Martha, of Liverpool, Captain Houſton; the Betſey, of ditto, Capt. Doyle;

the Amachree, of ditto, Capt. ———, I am not quite certain of the name, but I believe Captain Lee.

I think, Sir, I have already laid enough to the charge of this deteſted traffic; yet believe me if I were ſo diſpoſed, I could add much more of a ſimilar nature; but I will paſs it over, juſt only ſuggeſting one new topic on which I might enlarge, that I mean, of our *ſtaining the Commercial Honour of Great Britain*, by deſcending to every *petty fraud* in our dealings with the Natives.

But not to take up any more of your time on this part of the ſubject, I muſt paſs on to another, which originally ſtruck my mind as being more horrid than all the reſt, and which I think ſtill retains its ſuperiority; I mean the ſituation of the Slaves on board ſhip, or what is commonly called the *Middle Paſſage*. I will ſpare the Committee, however, the detail of all thoſe perfections in cruelty which it exhibits: but two or three inſtances I muſt mention, becauſe they are of a recent date, and ſtill more becauſe they will tend to convince thoſe who are inclined rather to regulate than aboliſh the Slave Trade, that ſo long as it is ſuffered to exiſt, the evils of the Middle Paſſage muſt exiſt alſo, though in reſpect of them, more than any other claſs, regulation might have been deemed effectual. We were told, I remember, in an early ſtage of our inquiry, that formerly indeed the Negroes were but ill accommodated during their conveyance, and perhaps there was now and then a conſiderable mortality; but ſuch had been the improvements of late years, that they were now quite comfortable and happy. Yet it was no longer ago than in the year 1788, that Mr. Iſaac Wilſon, whoſe intelligent and candid manner of giving his evidence, could not but impreſs the Committee with a high opinion of him, was doomed to witneſs ſcenes as deeply diſtreſſing as almoſt ever occurred in the annals of the Slave Trade. I will not condemn the Committee to liſten to the particulars of his dreadful tale, but for the preſent will content myſelf with pointing your attention to the mortality. His ſhip was a veſſel of 370 tons, and ſhe had on board 602 Slaves, a number greater than we at preſent allow, but rather leſs I think, than what was aſſerted by the Slave Merchants to be neceſſary in order to carry on their trade to any tolerable profit. Out of theſe 602 ſhe loſt 155. I will mention the mortality alſo of three

or

or four more veſſels which were in company with her, and belonged to the ſame owner. One of them bought 450, and buried 200; another bought 466, and buried 73; another bought 546, and buried 158; beſides 155 from his own ſhip, his number being 602; and from the whole four after the landing of their *Cargoes* there died 220. He fell in with another veſſel which loſt 362, the number ſhe had bought was not ſpecified. To theſe actual deaths during and immediately after the voyage, add the ſubſequent loſs in what is called the ſeaſoning, and conſider that this loſs would be greater than ordinary in *Cargoes* landed in ſo ſickly a ſtate. Why, Sir, were ſuch a mortality general, it would in a few months depopulate the earth. We aſked the Surgeon the cauſes of theſe exceſſive loſſes, particularly on board his own ſhip, where he had it in his power to aſcertain them; the ſubſtance of his reply was this:—that moſt of the Slaves appeared to labour under a fixed dejection and melancholy, interrupted now and then by lamentations and plaintive ſongs, expreſſive of their concern for the loſs of their relations and friends, and native country. So powerfully did this operate, that many attempted various ways of deſtroying themſelves; ſome endeavoured to drown themſelves, and three actually effected it; others obſtinately refuſed to take ſuſtenance, and when the whip and other violent means were uſed to compel them to eat, they looked up in the face of the officer who unwillingly executed this painful taſk, and ſaid in their own language "preſently we ſhall be no more." Their ſtate of mind produced a general languor and debility, which were increaſed in many inſtances by an unconquerable abſtinence from food, ariſing partly from ſickneſs, partly, to uſe the language of Slave Captains, from "ſulkineſs." Theſe cauſes naturally produced the flux, the contagion ſpread, numbers were daily carried off, and the diſorder aided by ſo many powerful auxiliaries reſiſted all the force of medicine. And it is worth while to remark, that theſe grievous ſufferings appear to have been in no degree owing either to want of care on the part of the owner, or to any negligence or harſhneſs of the Captain. When Mr. Wilſon was queſtioned if the ſhip was well fitted; as well, ſays he, as moſt veſſels are, and the Crew and Slaves as well treated as in moſt ſhips; and he afterwards ſpeaks of his Captain in ſtill ſtronger terms, as being a man of tenderneſs and humanity.

The

The ſhip in which Mr. Claxton the Surgeon ſailed, ſince the Regulating Act, afforded a repetition of all the ſame horrid circumſtances I have before alluded to. Suicide, in various ways, was attempted and effected, and the ſame barbarous expedients were reſorted to, in order to compel them to continue an exiſtence too painful to be endured: the mortality alſo was as great. And yet here alſo it appears to have been in no degree the fault of the Captain, who is repreſented as having felt for the Slaves in their wretched ſituation. If ſuch was the ſtate of things under Captains who had ſtill the feelings of their nature, what muſt it be under thoſe of a contrary deſcription? It would be a curious ſpeculation to conſider what would be the conduct towards his *Cargo* of ſuch a man as one of the ſix I lately ſpoke of: it would be curious to trace ſuch an one in idea through all the opportunities the Middle Paſſage would afford him of diſplaying the predominant features of his character.

Unhappily, Sir, it is not left for us here to form our own conjectures! Of the conduct of one of them at leaſt, I have heard incidents which ſurpaſs all my imagination could have conceived. One of them I would relate, if it were not almoſt too ſhocking for deſcription; and yet I feel it my duty, in the ſituation in which I ſtand, not to ſuffer myſelf to pay too much attention to what has been well called ſqueamiſhneſs on the part of the Committee. If it be too bad for me to recite, or for you to hear, it was not thought too bad for one of thoſe unhappy creatures to ſuffer, of whom I have this night the honour to be the Advocate. There was a poor girl on board, about fifteen years of age, who had unfortunately contracted a diſorder, which produced effects that rendered her a peculiar object of commiſeration. In this ſituation the poor girl being quite naked, bent down in a ſtooping poſture, wiſhing out of modeſty to conceal her infirmity: the Captain ordered her to walk upright, and when ſhe could not, or would not obey, he hoiſted her up, naked as ſhe was, by the wriſts, with her feet a little diſtance from the deck; and whilſt ſhe there hung, a ſpectacle to the whole crew, he flogged her with a whip with his own hands. He then hung her up in a ſimilar way by both legs, and laſtly by one leg; till at length having thus exhauſted the efforts of his ſavage invention, he releaſed her from her torments. The poor

unhappy

unhappy young woman never took heart again; what with the pain, and what with the ſhame ſhe ſuffered, ſhe fell into convulſions, and died within three days.—The perſon who related this fact to me is a profeſſional man, who is ready to declare it upon his oath. He has related to me other acts of barbarity, nearly as atrocious; and you will be little ſurpriſed to hear, that the cruelties of this wretch were not confined to Slaves alone, but that the Sailors came in for their ſhare. Mr. Wilberforce being called upon for the name of the Captain, ſaid, Captain Kimber is the man who performed theſe feats, the Commander of one of the ſix ſhips in the affair of Calabar.—Think only that theſe things paſſed but a few months ago, and here too, as I have before had occaſion to remark, you will obſerve that this was at the very moment of our inquiry and diſcuſſion; and yet even then they could not, though but for a ſhort interval, ſuſpend their work of cruelty, but purſued it more daringly and deſperately than ever. And ſo will it ever be whilſt you employ ſuch Agents as the Slave Trade either finds or makes: you will in vain endeavour to prevent the effects of thoſe ferocious diſpoſitions which this ſavage traffick too commonly creates; till your regulations can counteract the force of habit, and change the nature of the human mind, they will here be of no avail.

Nor, as you muſt have already collected, can they have all that effect which has ſometimes been ſuppoſed even in preventing the mortality. I do not, indeed, deny that the Regulating Act has leſſened this mortality, but not in the degree in which it is generally imagined; and even in the laſt year I know the deaths on ſhipboard will be found to have been between 10 and 11 per cent. on the whole number that was exported.—In truth, you cannot reach the cauſe of this mortality by all your Regulations.—Until you can cure a broken heart, until you can legiſlate for the affections, and bind by your ſtatutes the paſſions and feelings of the mind, you will in vain ſit here deviſing rules and orders: your labour will be but in vain: you cannot make theſe poor creatures live againſt their will: in ſpite of all you can do they will elude your Regulations; they will mock your Ordinances; and triumph, as they *have* already done, in *eſcaping* out of your hands.

O, Sir! are not theſe things too bad to be any longer endured? I cannot but perſuade myſelf that whatever difference

ference of opinion there may have been, we ſhall this night be at length unanimous. I cannot believe that a Britiſh Houſe of Commons will give its ſanction to the continuance of this infernal traffick. We were for a while ignorant of its real nature, but it has now been completely developed, and laid open to your view in all its horrors. Never was there indeed a ſyſtem ſo big with wickedneſs and cruelty: to whatever part of it you direct your view, whether to Africa, the Middle Paſſage, or the Weſt Indies, the eye finds no comfort, no ſatisfaction, no relief. It is the gracious ordinance of Providence, both in the natural and moral world, that good ſhould often ariſe out of evil: hurricanes clear the air, and the propagation of truth is promoted by perſecution: pride, vanity, profuſion, in their remoter conſequences contribute often to the happineſs of mankind; in common what is in itſelf evil and vicious, is permitted to carry along with it ſome circumſtances of palliation; even thoſe deſcriptions of men that may ſeem moſt noxious have often ſome virtues belonging to their order; the Arab is hoſpitable, the robber is brave; we do not neceſſarily find cruelty aſſociated with fraud, or meanneſs with injuſtice. But here the caſe is far otherwiſe; it is the prerogative of this deteſted traffick to ſeparate from evil its concomitant good, and reconcile diſcordant miſchiefs; it robs war of its generoſity, it deprives peace of its ſecurity; you have the vices of poliſhed ſociety without its knowledge or its comforts; and the evils of barbariſm without its ſimplicity. Nor are its ravages reſtricted as thoſe of other evils to certain limits either of extent or continuance; in the latter it is conſtant and unintermitted, in the former it is univerſal and indiſcriminate. No age, no ſex, no rank, no condition, is exempt from the fatal influence of this wide-waſting calamity! Thus it attains to the fulleſt meaſure of pure, unmixed, unſophiſticated wickedneſs; and ſcorning all competition or compariſon, it ſtands without a rival in the ſecure, undiſputed poſſeſſion of its deteſtable pre-eminence.

Such being the true character of that abhorred ſyſtem which I this night call upon you to aboliſh, it would I think be matter of inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment to any one, who being new to the diſcuſſion of this ſubject, ſhould be told for the firſt time, that it had been ſometimes attempted to be defended on the ground of humanity and benevolence. I do

not

not know that it is neceſſary to urge any thing in reply to this ſtrange argument, and I doubt whether any man poſſeſſed of all the powers of eloquence could make its abſurdity appear more ſtrongly than by ſimply ſtating it, and leaving it to itſelf. To honour it however with ſomewhat more particular attention than it deſerves; it has been ſaid the Slaves we take are captives and convicts, who, if we were not to carry them away, would all be butchered, and many of them ſacrificed at the funerals of people of rank, according to the ſavage cuſtom of Africa. Now, here, I beg it may be obſerved in the firſt place, that this argument applies only to the caſe of thoſe Slaves who are priſoners of war and convicts, and what I have already ſaid muſt have convinced the Committee, how much of our ſupply is derived from other ſources. And were it even true that you ſaved all of theſe two deſcriptions of people from certain death, theſe advocates for humanity would not have much on which to congratulate themſelves, would they but eſtimate the total waſte of the ſpecies which reſulted from this exerciſe of their philanthropy.

But this plea, miſerable as it would be if it were true, is altogether falſe and groundleſs. I could prove it ſo by a thouſand quotations if I were not afraid of treſpaſſing on the patience of the Committee: you have but to glance on the Evidence, and find it acknowledged by our opponents themſelves, that the cuſtom of ranſoming priſoners of war prevails in Africa; and as for what has been ſaid of human ſacrifices, I do not deny that there have been ſome inſtances of theſe, but they have been by no means proved more numerous or frequent than amongſt other barbarous nations; and where they exiſt, being acts of religion in order to quiet the Manes of the deceaſed Chieftain, they would probably not be waved for the ſake of a little commercial advantage. In the very inſtance of the King of Dahomey, which has been ſo much inſiſted on, one of the moſt intelligent and ſtrenuous of the witneſſes againſt the Abolition declared he believed that if the convicts ſhould fall ſhort for theſe ſacrifices, the requiſite number would be ſupplied by innocent people who would be ſeized for that purpoſe: ſo that admitting even the truth of your own aſſertion, you bring away ſuch as have deſerved to ſuffer, in order to leave the innocent to be ſacrificed in their ſtead.

But

But if not ſacrificed, the ſlaves, if we were to refuſe to buy them, would be deſtroyed.—To this aſſertion alſo we can oppoſe not only the reaſon of the thing, but abundant, complete, indiſputable teſtimony: in fact nothing can be more ridiculous than the grounds on which it has been aſſerted that the refuſed Slaves are deſtroyed or ſacrificed. I will mention to the Committee a ſingle inſtance or two as a ſpecimen of the reſt; it is to be found in the evidence of Capt. Frazer. I was curious to diſcover how a perſon declared to be in general a man of an amiable temper, could reconcile it to his principles and feelings to carry on the Slave Trade: The ſolution was furniſhed me when I found that he had imbibed this notion of the unhappy fate of the refuſed Slaves. Conſidering that he himſelf told us of other modes wherein they were diſpoſed of in various places, I thought him a little unreaſonable in this opinion: however, he frankly gave us the grounds of it: I muſt beg the Committee to hear them in his own words:—"I had a Cabenda boy with me as a "linguiſt, who informed me, one evening, that a Slave, whom "I would not purchaſe, was put to death in the following "manner:—the owner of this Slave who came from the in-"land country, as I was informed, called the traders and "fiſhermen together under a large tree. He told them that "the Slave whom the White Man would not buy, had run "away from him ſeveral times in his own country. He ac-"cuſed him of diſhoneſty. He declared that by the cuſtom "of that country, every man that met a runaway Slave was "obliged to bring him back to his maſter, for which the "maſter was obliged to pay him. He ſaid that this Slave run "away three times from him: that he paid more for bring-"ing him back than he was worth: that he derived no be-"neſit from his labour: that he had offered him to a White "Man, who refuſed to purchaſe him at the price he aſked: "that he was determined to put him to death to prevent the "neceſſity of paying any more for bringing him back, and "as an example to the reſt of his Slaves."

He then recites the particulars of the mode wherein the owner proceeded to the execution of his purpoſe. But can any thing be more unfair than to urge this as a proof that refuſed Slaves in general are put to death? It ſeems almoſt as if the owner of this boy had been on his guard to prevent the

the poſſibility of ſuch a conſtruction: he does not act like a man who thinks he may take away the life of his Slave on the mere impulſe of his own caprice, but he is ſolicitous not to ſubject himſelf to ſuch an imputation; he is anxious to juſtify himſelf to the ſurrounding natives, who might otherwiſe reſent his conduct; he accordingly convenes them for that purpoſe, and explains at large the grounds of his proceeding. Another inſtance is mentioned by Captain Frazer, wherein a ſucking child was about to be put to death, if he had not humanely reſcued it by the offer of a jug of brandy. But he has himſelf furniſhed you with an explanation of this incident; and on reading a little farther you find that it was the child of a woman who had been purchaſed the ſame day by another Captain. Captain Frazer carried the child on board and reſtored it to its mother, who went on her knees and kiſſed his feet.

But leaving this topick of the maſſacre of refuſed Slaves, it is added by the ſame votaries of humanity, that the general ſtate of things in Africa is ſuch, that the Slave Trade cannot render it worſe; that it is kindneſs to the inhabitants of that country to take them out of it. In ſhort, that inſtead of being the worſt enemies as I have ſtated, we have been in fact the benefactors of the Africans. This is a part of the ſubject on which very miſtaken notions have prevailed, and I beg leave to read certain extracts I have made with relation to it; they are many of them ſelected from the publication of my noble friend which I before referred to.

From theſe it will appear that the ſtate of things in Africa is by no means ſo barbarous as has been repreſented, and that the ſituation of thoſe who are in the condition of Slaves themſelves, is in no degree a ſtate of hardſhip and degradation. "Axim, ſays Boſman, is cultivated, and abounds with numerous large and beautiful villages; its inhabitants are induſtriouſly employed in trade, fiſhing, or agriculture; they export rice to all the Gold Coaſt"—"there is a great number of fine populous villages on the River Ancobar"—"The inhabitants of Adom always expoſe large quantities of corn, &c. to ſale, beſides what they want for their own uſe." "The people of Acron ſeldom or never go to war; they huſband their time and grounds ſo well that every year produces a plentiful harveſt." Speaking of the Gold Coaſt, he

ſays,

ſays, "their moſt artful works are the gold and ſilver hat-bands they make for us, the thread and contexture of which is ſo fine that I queſtion whether our European artiſts would not be put to it to imitate them; and indeed if they could, and were no better paid than the Negroes, they would be obliged to live on dry bread."—"The people of Fida are ſo ſtrongly bent on trade and agriculture, that they never think of war."—Speaking of the Fetu country, he ſays, "frequently when walking through it, I have ſeen it abound with fine well-built and populous towns, agreeably enriched with vaſt quantities of corn and cattle, palm wine and oil. The inhabitants all apply themſelves without diſtinction to agriculture: ſome ſow corn, others preſs oil, and draw wine from the palm trees."

I will now read from the evidence certain extracts deſcriptive of the ſtate of Slaves in Africa; and from theſe it will appear whether even *their* ſituation is ſuch a one as to give them much reaſon to envy the condition of their brethren, who have been carried to the Weſt Indies. "The Slaves are well fed, their labour is not conſtant, and there is no driver in Senegal and Gambia."—"Domeſtick Slaves have all the advantages of free men."—"Born Slaves cannot be ſold but for a crime on trial by their own clan."—And again, "domeſticks are not ſold by their maſters but for enormous crimes, and after trial by their own clan." "Many ſlaves in Africa are not eaſily diſtinguiſhed from their maſters."—"Slaves are treated well and familiarly at Angola."—"On the continent of Africa Slaves are few in number, they are treated well, eat with their maſters, work along with them, and are well clothed."—"The Slaves of perſons in Africa are treated by them as Europeans treat people of their own family;" and not to multiply extracts unneceſſarily, I will only add on this head the declaration of a witneſs, who informs us, that though "Blacks in Africa have ſaid they were Slaves, he never diſcovered this from their treatment."

I cannot diſmiſs this branch of the ſubject without begging the Committee to attend to ſome few farther extracts from authors of credit, which ſuggeſt how far Africa has benefited from her connection with Europeans. They ſhall be but few, for were I diſpoſed to multiply them, there would

be

be no end of my labour. I will paſs over many I had ſelected for the purpoſe of ſtating them to the Houſe, which reſpect the practices of breaking up villages, and of depredations both of the Whites on the Blacks, and of the Blacks on each other, encouraged and ſtimulated by the Europeans; but I muſt beg leave to read to the Committee a few which ſpeak of the exertions of our active benevolence in inciting them to war, and of the effect of the Slave Trade upon the criminal law and the adminiſtration of juſtice. From theſe laſt it will appear how far we can pretend with any decency, that by our humane interference we had reſcued their convicts from the barbarous ſeverity of their ſanguinary laws, and introduced a milder ſyſtem of criminal juriſprudence.

Smith, who was ſent out by the Royal African Company, in 1726, aſſures us, that "the diſcerning natives account it their greateſt unhappineſs that they were ever viſited by the Europeans. They ſay that we Chriſtians introduced the traffick of Slaves, and that before our coming they lived in peace. But, ſay they, "it is obſervable wherever Chriſtianity comes, there come with it a ſword, a gun, powder, and ball."

"The Europeans," ſays Brue, "are far from deſiring to act as peace-makers among them. It would be too contrary to their intereſts; for the only object of their wars is to carry off Slaves, and as theſe form the principal part of their traffick, they would be apprehenſive of drying up the ſource of it, were they to encourage the people to live well together."—"The neighbourhood of the Damel and Tin keep them perpetually at war, the benefit of which accrues to the Company, who buy all the priſoners made on either ſide, and the more there are to ſell, the greater is their profit; for the only end of their armaments is to make captives to ſell them to the White Traders."

Artus of Dantzick ſays, that in his time "thoſe liable to pay fines were baniſhed until the fine was paid, when they returned to their houſes and poſſeſſions."

Boſman affirms, that "the puniſhment for adultery is by fine; the fine among the common people is 4, 5, or 6 pounds, and among the rich more, perhaps 100l. or 200l. he has heard of fines of 5,000l."—"The puniſhment for theft on the Gold Coaſt is by fine."—"The greateſt crimes at Whydah are generally compenſated by money." Speaking of the Gold

Coaſt, he ſays, "Nobody is here fined above his ability, unleſs by an accumulation of crimes he hath given occaſion thereto, and then he is ſent into Slavery."—At Benin he informs us, that "theft is puniſhed by reſtitution and fine, and if the thief is poor, after the reſtitution of the goods, if in his power, he is very well beaten."

Moore, who reſided ſeven years on the Coaſt, as Factor to the Company, ſays, "ſince this Trade has been uſed, all puniſhments have been changed into Slavery; there being an advantage in ſuch condemnation, they ſtrain the crimes very hard in order to get the benefit of ſelling the criminal. Not only murder, theft, and adultery, are puniſhed by ſelling the criminal for a Slave, but every trifling crime is puniſhed in the ſame manner."

Atkins, ſpeaking of adultery and theft, ſays, "Trade has ſo infected them with covetouſneſs and fraud, that the Chiefs will put ſnares both for the one and the other, driving at the profit, and not at the puniſhment of a crime."

Loyer affirms, that "the King of Sain on the leaſt pretence ſells his ſubjects for European goods. He is ſo tyrannically ſevere, that he makes a whole village reſponſible for the faults of one inhabitant, and on the leaſt offence ſells them all for Slaves."

Such, Sir, are the teſtimonies that have been borne, not by perſons whom I have ſummoned, not by friends to the Abolition, but by men who were, many of them, themſelves engaged in the Slave Trade. Many, many more I could add of the ſame kind, but theſe are abundantly ſufficient to refute the unfounded aſſertions of theſe pretended advocates for humanity. But in truth were they even to make good their aſſertions, they would in my mind little mend their cauſe: were it ever ſo true, as it is moſt falſe, that you made them happier by taking them away, this would give you no right to take them againſt their will.

I have ſometimes been reproached with my extravagant humanity. But I may now repel the accuſation, and for myſelf declare, as I have ſaid before, that I reſt this queſtion not on the ground of humanity, but of RELIGION AND JUSTICE. It has ſometimes alſo been imputed to me, that I am actuated by a ſpirit of fanaticiſm and bigotry; but I beg it may here be obſerved, that it is on my opponents and not on me that theſe

charges

charges may be fairly urged: their's are the very principles on which have been reſted the groſſeſt ſyſtems of bigotry and ſuperſtition that ever diſgraced the annals of mankind. On what other principles was it that Mahomet ſent forth his Muſſulmen to ravage the world? Was it not theſe that lighted the fires of the inquiſition? Have not both theſe ſyſtems been founded on the notion of your having a right to violate the laws of juſtice, for the purpoſes of humanity? Did they not both plead that they were promoting the eternal happineſs of mankind; and that their proceedings were therefore to be juſtified on the dictates of true and enlarged benevolence? But the religion I profeſs is of another nature; it teaches me firſt to do juſtice, and next to love mercy; not that the claims of theſe two will ever be really found to be jarring and inconſiſtent: When you obey the laws of God, when you attend to the claims of juſtice, you will then alſo beſt conſult and moſt advance the happineſs of mankind. This is true, this is enlarged benevolence; and of this it may be affirmed in the unparalleled language of a great writer, "that her ſeat "is the boſom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: "all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very "leaſt as feeling her care, the greateſt as not exempted "from her influence: both angels and men, and every other "creature, though each in different ſort and order, yet all "with uniform conſent, admiring her as the mother of their "peace and joy."

I ſhall next touch for a moment on a ground whereon our opponents, driven as they are from place to place in queſt of argument, have often attempted to take their ſtand: that I mean of other nations being likely to carry on the Slave Trade if we were to abandon it; on which the concluſion is then reſted, that if ſo, however wicked, however cruel it is, we might as well carry it on ourſelves. Admitting the ſuppoſition to be juſt, the inference that is drawn from it was ſo completely expoſed laſt year by the Right Honourable Gentleman oppoſite to me, that it can hardly be neceſſary for me now to ſay a ſyllable on the ſubject. I will therefore only repeat what I have declared on former occaſions, that I have no doubt if we were to aboliſh the Slave Trade, other nations would follow our example.

Nor can any thing be more unreaſonable than for Gentlemen to urge againſt the probability of this event, that the nations in queſtion, ſo far from aboliſhing, have even lately paſſed edicts, and granted bounties for the encouragement of the Trade. If for four or five years we have been carrying on a laborious inveſtigation into its nature and circumſtances; if after developing its genuine character, and aſcertaining its dreadful effects, we ſtill hang back and heſitate, was it fair to expect, as I argued on a former occaſion, that the nations in queſtion ſhould relinquiſh the Trade without inquiry, little acquainted as they muſt be ſuppoſed to be with its accumulated horrors, and even confirmed by our delay in the idea of their having been exaggerated? And is it juſt to infer, that they will continue in the commiſſion of theſe crimes knowingly, becauſe they have hitherto done it ignorantly? In fact, Sir, an incident that has lately happened in a neighbouring kingdom, tends to confirm this very reaſoning, and it ſhould encourage the friends of Abolition to find that their generous efforts have already produced ſome effect. Denmark has conſented to aboliſh the Slave Trade in 10 years. Dreadful indeed is the idea of tolerating for a moment, much more for ſo long a term, ſuch a ſyſtem of wickedneſs; but let it be ſaid in excuſe for Denmark, that ſhe knew but little of its enormity in compariſon with us, and that ſhe alſo with ſomewhat more colour of reaſoning, if the argument can in any caſe be endured, may allege that the number of Slaves ſhe takes off was ſo ſmall, that her going out of the trade would make no real difference in the number exported from Africa. But can we ſay this, who carry off almoſt as many as all the reſt of Europe put together? There is in fact no nation in the world by which this argument may not be uſed with more decency than by ourſelves.

But miſerable as this pretext is, I am afraid it will be found on a cloſer inquiry that we have no right to avail ourſelves of it: let us aſk ourſelves honeſtly, if we act like thoſe who are really influenced by this conſideration. If we were ſincere in our profeſſions, we ſhould ſurely labour to convince the nations of Europe of the enormities of the Slave Trade, and ſtrive to prevail on them to deſiſt from it; whereas we do the very reverſe, we ſanction it by our example, we puſh it to an unparalleled extent, and furniſh them with this very argument,

which

which if they accept, the Slave Trade can never be aboliſhed at all. But there are ſome perſons who adopt a ſtill bolder language, and who declare without reſerve, that religion and juſtice, and humanity command the Abolition of the Slave Trade, but that they muſt oppoſe the meaſure becauſe it is inconſiſtent with the national intereſt. I truſt and believe no ſuch argument will be uſed this night; for what is it but to eſtabliſh a competition between God and Mammon, and to adjudge the preference to the latter? what but to dethrone the moral Governor of the world, and to fall down and worſhip the Idol of Intereſt? What a manifeſto were this to the ſurrounding nations; What a leſſon to our own people! Come then ye Nations of the Earth, and learn a new Code of Morality from the Parliament of Great Britain. We have diſcarded our old prejudices; we have diſcovered that religion and juſtice, and humanity, are mere rant and rhapſody! Why, Sir, theſe are principles which Epicurus would have rejected for their impiety, and Machiavel and Borgia would have diſclaimed as *too* infamous for avowal, and *too* injurious to the general happineſs of mankind. If God in his anger would puniſh us for this formal renunciation of his authority, what ſeverer vengeance could he inflict than our ſucceſsful propagation of theſe accurſed maxims? Conſider what effects would follow from their univerſal prevalence; what ſcenes ſhould we ſoon behold around us: in publick affairs, breach of faith, and anarchy and bloodſhed; in private life, fraud and diſtruſt, and perfidy, and whatever can degrade the human character, and poiſon the comforts of ſocial and domeſtick intercourſe. Men muſt retire to caves and deſerts, and withdraw from a world become too bad to be endured.

If it be, however, our formal determination thus to ſurrender ourſelves, without reſerve, to the domination of hard, unfeeling avarice; if we do reſolve thus to ſell ourſelves for gain, let it not, at leaſt, be for ſuch a gain as this, ſo minute, ſo dubious, which the ableſt and beſt informed men in the kingdom declare to you to be an injurious, rather than a beneficial poſſeſſion; let us atchieve ſome clearly profitable villany, ſome maſter-ſtroke of wickedneſs; we ſhall then at leaſt be juſtified on our own principles: but in this inſtance you incur the utmoſt guilt in purſuit of the ſmalleſt and moſt

queſtionable profit, and diſcredit not your hearts only, but your underſtandings. And if ever there were a ſeaſon when we ſhould leaſt of all act on this principle, it is the preſent day of our unexampled proſperity: ſhall we chuſe this very moment, when we are enjoying ſo much from the bounty of Providence, for openly trampling its laws under our feet, and pouring contempt on its moſt authoritative injunctions? Why, Sir, if there were one of the brute creation, who, being himſelf pampered to the full, were thus to make his happineſs conſiſt in vexing and perſecuting thoſe weaker animals whom his ſtrength enabled him to injure with impunity, we ſhould drive it from us as too bad to be domeſticated by mankind. Oh Sir! let us ſpare a ſmall part of our full cup of happineſs, in order to give comfort and joy to thouſands upon thouſands of our fellow creatures who are now groaning under oppreſſion and wretchedneſs. Nay you are not even called upon in this inſtance to give up any thing you enjoy; but here you may do good by wholeſale, and at no expence; you may enrich others and be yourſelves no poorer. Surely it is conſiderations like theſe, it is the deſire of ceaſing from the guilt of abuſing the bounty of Heaven, and a ſenſe of the obligation they are under to communicate to others the happineſs they themſelves enjoy, that has cauſed the people of Great Britain to ſtep forward on this occaſion, and expreſs their ſenſe more generally and unequivocally than in any inſtance wherein they have ever before interfered. I ſhould in vain attempt to expreſs to you the ſatisfaction with which it has filled my mind, to ſee ſo great and glorious a concurrence, to ſee this great cauſe triumphing over all leſſer diſtinctions, and ſubſtituting cordiality and harmony in the place of diſtruſt and oppoſition: nor have its effects amongſt ourſelves been in this reſpect leſs diſtinguiſhed or leſs honourable; it has raiſed the character of Parliament. Whatever may have been thought or ſaid concerning the unreſtrained prevalency of our political diviſions, it has taught ſurrounding nations, it has taught our admiring country, that there are ſubjects ſtill beyond the reach of party; there is a point of elevation where we get above the jarring of the diſcordant elements that ruffle and agitate the vale below: in our ordinary atmoſphere, clouds and vapours obſcure the air, and we are the ſport of a thouſand conflicting winds and adverſe currents; but here,

we

we move in a higher region, where all is pure and clear and ſerene, free from perturbation and diſcompoſure:

> As ſome tall cliff that liſts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the ſtorm;
> Tho' round its breaſt the rolling clouds are ſpread,
> Eternal ſunſhine ſettles on its head.

Here then, on this auguſt eminence, let us build the temple of benevolence; let us lay its foundation deep, in truth and juſtice, and let the inſcription on its gates be "Peace and good Will towards men." Here let us offer the firſt fruit of our proſperity; here let us devote ourſelves to the ſervice of theſe wretched men, and go forth burning with a generous ardor to compenſate, if poſſible, for the injuries we have hitherto brought on them: Let us heal the breaches we have made: Let us rejoice in becoming the happy inſtruments of arreſting the progreſs of rapine and deſolation, and of introducing into that immenſe country the bleſſings of chriſtianity, the comforts of civilized, and the ſweets of ſocial life. I am perſuaded, Sir, there is no man who hears me who would not join with me in hailing the arrival of this happy period; who does not feel his mind cheered and ſolaced by the contemplation of theſe delightful ſcenes. The firſt ſtep towards realizing them, muſt be to agree with me this night in the motion I mean to bring forward.

But it has been ſometimes ſaid, theſe are all idle and illuſive expectations; the Africans are unconquerably ſavage; all attempts to civilize them muſt be in vain. Whatever, I might have thought of the argument itſelf, I ſhould have given thoſe who urged it, more credit for their ſincerity, if I had found them acting like men who were convinced of its truth: but ſurely, it argues their diſtruſt of its validity, when you ſee them not merely abſtaining themſelves from attempting the civilization of Africa, but, even obſtructing and oppoſing others who are engaged in the proſecution of this benevolent deſign. It is with ſhame and humiliation, I remind the Committee of the reſiſtance that was made to an honourable friend of mine, when he brought forward a meaſure for eſtabliſhing one little ſettlement in Africa, wherein the natives, ſecure from the ravages of the Slave Trade, might cultivate the ground in peace; where we might inſti-

tute a bloodleſs traffic in the productions of the ſoil, inſtead of this wicked commerce in the fleſh and blood of our fellow creatures. How was he thwarted in the exerciſe of his benevolence? Petitions poured in from the African Traders, the whole ſtate of things was changed, and the natives, who had been before deſcribed as being ſo inſuperably indolent, that it was impoſſible to prevail on them to work, were now ſtated to be an induſtrious people, who furniſhed the African ſhips with rice and other proviſions in great quantities, and at reaſonable rates.

But, Sir, theſe inconſiſtencies and contradictions were not wanted to convince any reaſonable man, that there was no foundation for the opinion, that it was impoſſible to civilize the continent of Africa. After having ſo long troubled the Houſe, I dare not enter into the wide field it would be neceſſary for us to inveſtigate, in order to the complete diſcuſſion of this argument: I may do it hereafter, if it be required of me; mean while, I will only remark, that there are no inſtances of barbariſm amongſt the Africans, for which we may not find a parallel in the hiſtory of our own anceſtors. In fact, Sir, this argument when traced to its foundation, will be found to bottom on the opinion, that the Negroes are not of the human ſpecies: this is now, I hope and believe, an exploded idea; but let it never be forgotten, that none was originally contended for with more ſhameleſs obſtinacy, and I now mention it the rather, becauſe I am perſuaded that the Slave Trade can find no other reſting place. And, give me leave to ſay, that the advocates for this inhuman traffic, acted more honeſtly, and fairly, and openly whilſt they took their ſtand here, than they do now in continuing to contend after they have been forced to abandon the premiſes. Oh! Sir, for their own happineſs it were to have been wiſhed, that theſe poor creatures had not been poſſeſſed of human feelings! but they have ſhewn the contrary, by ten thouſand different proofs. They are confeſſed to be, in their own country, remarkably hoſpitable and kind. What do they not feel on being ſeparated from their friends and connections and native country? Witneſs their arts of ſuicide on ſhip board, and that expedient which is provided in the very conſtruction of a Slave ſhip, to prevent their terminating an exiſtence, become too painful to be endured. Their attachment

ment to their maſters, when kindly treated, is acknowledged by our opponents, and a thouſand other proofs might be adduced of their poſſeſſing all the beſt feelings of our nature. No, Sir; it is we, that muſt confeſs ourſelves deficient in tenderneſs. From theſe deſpiſed beings, whom we would degrade to the level of the brute creation, let us diſcover what it is to have human feelings; let us learn from them the myſtery of compaſſion, and borrow the ſympathies of a nature ſuperior in ſenſibility to our own.

I muſt ſay a word or two concerning the terms of my motion, which differs a little from that of laſt year. Gentlemen may concur with me in my vote who approve of a bill for deferring the period of Abolition. My conviction of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of immediately ſtopping this trade remains however as ſtrong and unſhaken as ever; *I* can admit of no compromiſe, and will avail myſelf of any opportunity of at once deſtroying this ſyſtem of iniquity. I am ſure too, that the immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade is to be juſtified on the principles of ſound policy. Let it not be thought, Sir, either of my Right Honourable Friend, who ſits near me, or of myſelf, that it was for our own ſakes that we went into that minute detail, and thoſe laborious calculations; from a ſenſe of duty we condeſcended to ſuch ignoble drudgery, but we appealed ourſelves to more ſimple and more exalted principles: where the commands of juſtice and humanity are ſo imperious, I know not how to admit of parley or of compromiſe. Let thoſe who talk of allowing three or four years to the continuance of the Slave Trade, think of the diſgraceful ſcenes that paſſed laſt year. For myſelf, however, I will waſh my hands of the blood that would be ſpilled in this horrid interval: I will proteſt againſt its being granted, as the moſt flagrant violation of every principle of juſtice and humanity. I cannot but believe, that the hour is at length come, when we ſhall put a final period to the exiſtence of this unchriſtian traffic: but if in this fond expectation, I ſhould be unhappily miſtaken, be aſſured, Sir, I never will deſert the cauſe, but to the laſt moment of my life, I will exert my utmoſt powers in the ſervice of that unhappy country. In truth, if I were not to perſevere. I muſt be dead to every generous emotion that can actuate, and ſtimulate the mind of man. Can a noble object intereſt?

or

or the conſciouſneſs of an honourable office? What object ſo noble as this of relieving the miſeries of thouſands upon thouſands of our fellow creatures; introducing chriſtianity and civilization to a fourth part of the habitable globe? I am, indeed, conſcious of the honourable nature of the office I have undertaken, and grateful to God for having permitted me to take the lead in the communication of ſuch extended bleſſings. My taſk is one in which it is impoſſible to tire; my work repays itſelf, it fills my mind with complacency and peace. I lie down with it at night with compoſure, and riſe to it in the morning with alacrity. If it obliges me to be converſant with ſcenes of wretchedneſs, this is but like viſiting an hoſpital from motives of humanity, where your own feelings repay you for the pain you undergo. No Sir, no; I never will deſiſt from this bleſſed work; but I cannot help perſuading myſelf, that there will be no call for my perſeverance; I will not allow myſelf to doubt about the iſſue, and cheerfully wait the event of your deciſion.

Mr. Wilberforce then moved.

"That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the trade carried on by Britiſh ſubjects, for the purpoſe of obtaining Slaves on the coaſt of Africa, ought to be aboliſhed."

Were this motion carried, Mr. Wilberforce gave notice that he intended to follow it up by another.

"That the Chairman be directed to move the Houſe for leave to bring in a bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade."

Mr. Baillie.—It is upon the certainty of meeting with every ſpecies of indulgence that is uſually granted, by this Honourable Houſe, to all its new Members, that I muſter confidence ſufficient to offer my humble opinion upon the preſent queſtion; a queſtion, Sir, of the greateſt importance that ever came before Parliament, novel and ſpeculative in its nature, and ſupported by ſome of the greateſt orators who have ever appeared within the walls of this Houſe. There is no man living entertains a more indifferent opinion of his own abilities than I do; and I feel moſt ſenſibly, and with great mortification, the inſufficiency

ſufficiency of my powers, when brought into compariſon with the brilliant parts of the Honourable Gentlemen with whom I have to contend. However, Sir, being very particularly ſituated as Agent to one of the moſt valuable of our Iſlands, having paſſed the moſt active part of my life in the Weſt Indies, having in the Britiſh Weſt India Iſlands a conſiderable property, both in land and Negroes, and being at the ſame time as much intereſted in the general welfare and proſperity of the trade, the manufactures, and the navigation of Great Britain, as any Gentleman in the preſent Parliament, I flatter myſelf that this Honourable Houſe will not conſider my interference as improper; eſpecially, Sir, when I can aſſure the Honourable Committee, that I conſider the preſent Queſtion as involving in its conſequences a conſiderable proportion of the trade and navigation of Great Britain, and the very exiſtence of thoſe valuable Weſt India Colonies, which have been eſtabliſhed by this country for upwards of a century, nouriſhed, cheriſhed, and ſupported, under various Acts of Parliament, and at the expence of a very ſerious and weighty outlay of money. I will not, Sir, at this early ſtage of my argument, make any obſervations upon the deſcription of people who have ſo very eagerly, and with ſo much zeal and induſtry, propagated and brought forward this unfortunate and impolitic Queſtion: I will content myſelf by obſerving, that they have very artfully placed the management of the buſineſs in the hands of an Honourable Gentleman, reſpectable in his Character, and amiable in his manners, and for whoſe private virtues no man entertains a greater value than I do. This Gentleman, Sir, is the known and avowed friend and favourite of the Right Honourable Gentleman who ſo very ably, and ſo worthily preſides at the head of the Adminiſtration of this country. His arguments, upon a former occaſion, operated upon the Miniſter's mind, and at the ſame time extended their effects to the mind of the Right Honourable Gentleman who makes ſo very conſpicuous a figure upon the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe. There is neither in or out of Parliament, Sir, a man who is a greater admirer of the incomparable and brilliant abilities of theſe Right Honourable Gentlemen, than I am; I conſider them, Sir, as ornaments to this Houſe, and ornaments to their country; but however I may be diſpoſed to bow, with all due ſubmiſſion, to their opinions upon other occaſions, yet upon the preſent queſtion I differ

I differ from them moſt eſſentially: I mean, Sir, I differ from the opinions they gave upon the former inveſtigation of the queſtion; for, from the circumſtances that have occurred in the Hiſtory of the Weſtern World, ſince the cloſe of the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, I flatter myſelf that they are now made fully ſenſible of the evil and dangerous tendency of the meaſure. However, Sir, to come to the Right Honourable Gentlemen in a Miniſterial capacity, I do maintain, without meaning any perſonal offence whatever, that the part they acted, upon the Queſtion's being debated in Parliament laſt year, was unexpected, very unbecoming their high characters, and not at all conſiſtent with the principles upon which, in my humble opinion, great Stateſmen ought to act.

I conceive it, Sir, to be the indiſpenſible duty of men in high ſituations, and who are, or may be, intruſted with the lead of public affairs, to conſider the general intereſt of the State, and of individuals, with a moſt ſcrupulous and attentive eye, and to ſee that the good policy of the country, and the good underſtanding that has long ſubſiſted betwixt Government and our ſubjects in our diſtant Colonies, under the ſanction and protection of various Acts of the Parliament of Great Britain, ſhould not be broken in upon by ſuch a wild, ſuch an impracticable, and ſuch a viſionary ſcheme, as the preſent queſtion for aboliſhing the African Slave Trade. I flattered myſelf, Mr. Chairman, that the friends and promoters of the Abolition would have contented themſelves with the miſchiefs that had already ariſen, in conſequence of the agitation of that unfortunate meaſure; and that the ſanguinary diſpoſition of a certain deſcription of people, would have been fully ſatiated with the innocent blood that has already been ſpilt: but, alas! Sir, that is not likely to be the caſe; many of them have been known and heard to exult at the calamities we daily read of, ſo that in all probability, the miſchief is only done in part, and it requires the total deſolation and deſtruction of the Weſt India Colonies of Great Britain to complete the melancholy ſcene. I have in my hand, Mr. Chairman, a ſmall pamphlet, printed and publiſhed by order of the Weſt India Planters and Merchants, for the uſe and information of the Members of both Houſes of Parliament; it contains, Sir, the ſpeech of the Deputies of St. Domingo to the National Aſſembly of France, and alſo the ſpeech of M. Boſtrand, the late Miniſter of the Marine, to the ſaid Aſſembly,

Aſſembly, upon the inſurrection of the Negroes in that iſland. If, Sir, the deſtruction of the moſt extenſive and moſt valuable colony in the world, the maſſacre of its inhabitants, the raviſhing of the moſt beautiful part of the creation in a manner hitherto unknown and unheard of, and the unnatural murder of fathers, by the hands of their own children, are ſufficient to operate upon the feelings of humanity, there is not, I am perſuaded, a Gentleman in this Houſe, who can withſtand the ſhock; but to me, who have a perſonal knowledge of the theatre of theſe dreadful ſcenes, and who (though an Engliſhman, and at St. Domimgo in the very glorious and ſucceſsful war that was carried on, under the auſpices of that great and immortal Stateſman Lord Chatham) received diſtinguiſhed marks of kindneſs and hoſpitality from many of thoſe families, who by the late melancholy events have been tranſmitted to oblivion, they are doubly afflicting; and when I bring to my recollection, that the cauſes of all theſe calamities have originated in Great Britain, I am overwhelmed with ſorrow. The iſland of St. Domingo, Mr. Chairman, is as large as the kingdom of England. In the year 1789, the imports into the colony from France, exceeded three millions ſterling, excluſive of near thirty thouſand Negroes, which at a very moderate valuation, may be eſtimated at two millions ſterling more: the exports from the colony, in the ſame year, amounted in value to ſix millions ſterling, and their trade gave employment to three hundred thouſand tons of ſhipping, and thirty thouſand ſeamen. Theſe circumſtances, I take the liberty of mentioning to the Honourable Houſe, as a confirmation of the teſtimony I gave before the Committee of the Houſe of Commons, when ſitting on the Slave Trade in the year 1790. In my evidence on that occaſion, I believe, Sir, I gave it as my opinion, that the African and Weſt India trade of France generally employed betwixt forty and fifty thouſand ſeamen; and when it comes to be conſidered, that the produce of St. Domingo is hardly equal to two thirds of the whole produce of the French Weſt India Colonies, I flatter myſelf it will be admitted, that I have not exceeded in my calculation.

Having ſaid ſo much, Mr. Chairman, by way of introduction, to what I have to offer upon the queſtion before the Honourable Houſe, I muſt now beg leave to make ſome obſervations upon the ſpeech of the Honourable Gentleman who

brought it forward, which I will endeavour to do, in as conciſe a manner as poſſible. I will afterwards take the liberty of calling the attention of the Honourable Committee, to the value and importance of the Weſt India and African Trade to Great Britain; to ſome of the authorities under which the Weſt India Colonies and African Trade were eſtabliſhed; to their dependence on each other, and to the injuſtice and impolicy of the preſent attempt to aboliſh the African Slave Trade.

The Honourable Gentleman who brought forward this queſtion, has made uſe of nearly the ſame arguments, on the preſent occaſion, as he did upon the diſcuſſion of the ſubject laſt year. And though it may be conſidered as tedious, and even inſulting in me, to go into the particulars of a maſs of evidence, which I take it for granted every individual Member of this Honourable Houſe is perfect maſter of, yet it is incumbent on me, ſpeaking generally on the ſubject, to take notice of the very partial manner in which the Honourable Gentleman and his friends have garbled, from the whole body, ſuch particular parts of the evidence, as were ſuited to anſwer their own purpoſes: and with what an indecent indifference they have treated the teſtimony of the ſeveral great and reſpectable characters who voluntarily came forward, on our part, to remove that load of calumny and abuſe, which has ſo illiberally and ſo wantonly been thrown out againſt every perſon connected with the Weſt Indies. I am very far from denying, Mr. Chairman, that many acts of inhumanity have been committed in the tranſportation of Slaves from the Coaſt of Africa to the Weſt Indies, and in the treatment of thoſe Negroes after they had been landed on our Iſlands; but, as I believe, Sir, that the failings and frailties of human nature prevail generally, in pretty much the ſame proportion, all over the world, I mean among civilized nations, it would be very unreaſonable to expect, among the claſs of people concerned in the African Trade, or among the inhabitants of the Britiſh Weſt India Iſlands, a degree of perfection in *morals*, that is not to be found in Great Britain itſelf. Will any man eſtimate the character of the Engliſh nation, by what is to be read in the records of the Old Bailey; or, will any of the moſt ſanguine friends of the Abolition, pretend to ſay, that there have not been committed, in this great and opulent city in which we live, acts of as ſhocking, as baſe, and as barbarous a nature,

as

as any contained in the great mass of evidence, now lying on your table? I have lived, Sir, sixteen years of my life in the West Indies, and notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, I do declare, in the most solemn manner, that I consider the Negroes in the British West India Islands, to be in as comfortable a state, as the lower orders of mankind in any country in Europe.

Before the agitation of this unfortunate and impolitic question, their minds were at ease, and they were perfectly contented with their situation; and the confidence betwixt them and their masters was so unbounded, that except in the stores where sugar, rum, provisions, and cloathing were generally lodged, no locks were ever used. This, Sir, I can assure the Honourable Committee, was the general disposition of the Negroes, in the British West India Islands in the year 1776, when I returned to Europe, and they continued in that happy state until the enemies of the Colonies came forward, and propagated, with so much zeal and industry, the principles of their pernicious doctrines. But, Sir, I am sorry to say, it is very far from being the case at present: the West India Islands are filled with Emissaries, and publications of the friends of Abolition. An universal want of confidence now prevails, and instead of being in that happy state, in which I have represented them, every countenance carries the appearance of anxiety and care, and there is not an estate without a depot for arms, lodged there for the very purpose of destroying those, whose lives it is our wish to preserve upon every principle of humanity and interest. Some Gentlemen may probably consider these precautions as consistent with the general system of oppression with which we are charged; but to me, who have been in situations of danger, and know something of the feelings of men, upon such occasions, I can assure the Honourable Gentleman, that self preservation foregoes all other considerations.

Having said so much, Mr. Chairman, of the civil state of the Negroes in our Islands, I must now, with the permission of the Honourable House, speak to their religious state, beginning with the Island of Grenada, where my property chiefly lies. That Island, was ceded to Great Britain, at the peace of 1763. Upon our taking possession of it, the Negroes were found baptized, and instructed in such of the principles of the Roman

Roman Catholic faith, as were ſuited to their humble capacities. That religion now univerſally prevails; for as new Negroes were imported from Africa, they naturally adopted the religious principles of thoſe they found upon the Iſland, and the Prieſts, who are always extremely induſtrious in their vocations, never failed of giving them the neceſſary inſtructions; ſo that in the courſe of twelve months, they generally entertained very tolerable ideas of religious duties. There being no Proteſtant Clergymen at that time in the Colony, the Gentlemen of the Iſland gave every poſſible encouragement to the religious purſuits of their Negroes; one-half of the number on each eſtate were permitted to go every Sunday to public Maſs, and the mornings and evenings of the Sabbath were dedicated to religious worſhip on the Plantations, where the whole Gang, *as it is called*, aſſembled at the dwelling houſe or manſion, and went through the ſervice of the Church of Rome, under the immediate eye of the Maſter or Manager, in a manner, and with a fervency, that would have done credit to more civilized ſocieties: and as I am one of thoſe who firmly believe that a remnant of all will be ſaved, I can aſſure the Honourable Committee, that I have experienced on theſe occaſions ſuch feelings and reflections, as would not have diſhonoured the moſt pure and pious mind. As to the religious ſtate of the Negroes in the iſlands where the Roman Catholic faith does not prevail, I am extremely ſorry to obſerve, that I cannot ſay ſo much for it. The Moravian Miſſionaries have of late made great progreſs in opening the minds of the Negroes, in our old iſlands, to a ſenſe of religious duties; but there is among the Clergy of our eſtabliſhed Church a degree of inattention and indolence that is very much to be lamented, and which is very unpardonable on their part, conſidering the ample proviſion that is made for them by the Legiſlatures of our ſeveral Colonies. The pious and reſpectable character who at preſent ſo worthily fills the ſee of London, is, by what I am informed, extremely attentive to the morals and characters of ſuch men as are admitted into holy orders, for the purpoſe of occupying the livings in the Weſt India iſlands; and I am perfectly convinced that all poſſible means will be made uſe of by that moſt excellent Prelate, to extend the bleſſings of the Goſpel to the minds of the Negroes on all our Plantations.

The

The Honourable Gentleman who brought forward this queſtion, and his friends, have, on the preſent and former occaſions, dwelt very much upon the ſeverity of the puniſhments that are uſually adminiſtered to our Negroes in the Weſt India Iſlands. I admit, Mr. Chairman, that inſtances of inhumanity, and even cruelty, may be produced; but I deny moſt poſitively, that the principle or practice is general, and I wiſh to be permitted to aſk ſuch of the Members of this Honourable Houſe, as have had the honour of ſerving in his Majeſty's navy and army, if it is poſſible or practicable to maintain that order and ſubordination that is abſolutely neceſſary among bodies of men, without the fear of puniſhment: I ſay, Sir, that it is not poſſible; and as puniſhments always fall on delinquents, of which there are a certain number in every ſociety, I do maintain, that in every ſhip's crew and regiment, there is as great a proportion of people who come within that deſcription, as in any Gang of Negroes in the Weſt Indies, be they ever ſo indifferently diſpoſed. That being admitted, Sir, I will be glad to aſk, if ever there are puniſhments inflicted on our ſeamen and ſoldiers. Have we ever heard, Sir, of ſeamen being flogged from ſhip to ſhip, or of ſoldiers dying in the very act of puniſhment, under the laſh of the drummer, when tied up to the halberts, and expoſed in as ſhameful and ignominious a manner as poſſibly can be conceived? And have we not alſo heard, even in this country of boaſted liberty, of ſeamen's being kidnapped and carried away, when returning from diſtant voyages, after an abſence of many years, and that even without being allowed the comfort of ſeeing their wives and families? I am extremely ſorry to be under the neceſſity of having recourſe to theſe circumſtances, but I am preſſed to it by the very illiberal manner in which our opponents have brought forward every circumſtance that applies to Africa and to the Weſt Indies. With regard, Sir, to objects of miſery and compaſſion, they are much more frequently to be met with in Europe than in America. And I declare, without heſitation, and upon the beſt grounds of perſonal knowledge and information, that there is more wretchedneſs and poverty in the pariſh of St. Giles's, in which I live, than there is in the whole of the extenſive Colonies that now are, and formerly were, under the dominion of Great Britain, taking them from

Barbadoes to Jamaica, round by the Floridas, and from thence to the iſland of Newfoundland.

I hope the Honourable Committee will have the goodneſs to excuſe me for dwelling ſo long upon this part of my argument, and for requeſting their particular attention to the very unhandſome and illiberal manner in which the Honourable Gentleman, who takes the lead in this buſineſs, and ſome of his friends, have treated the characters of many of the witneſſes who were examined before the Committee of the Houſe of Commons. I am very far, Sir, from being diſpoſed to make general reflections upon any body or ſet of men, in the manner that has been adopted by theſe Honourable Gentlemen; nor will I go into the particulars of the evidence, taking it for granted, that the unprejudiced part of this Honourable Houſe will conſider the individuals that have been brought forward on the part of the African Merchants, to be full as reſpectable, as unbiaſſed, and as independent in their characters and ſituations, as thoſe who have appeared on the other ſide. As to what regards that part of the evidence that applies to the Weſt Indies, I am of a very different opinion indeed; I admit, Sir, that there were produced by our opponents, ſome perſons, to whoſe teſtimony, *a certain portion of credit ought to be given*; but they were few in number, and therefore I will venture to ſay, that their general body of witneſſes was compoſed of ill-informed, ignorant, and low men; many of them picked up in the ſtreets of Liverpool and Briſtol, where they were ſtarving for want of bread, having neither ability nor reputation to get into any employment, and hired by the Emiſſaries and Agents of the Society in the Old Jewry, for the very purpoſe of giving ſuch teſtimony, as would miſlead the minds of the public, who had already been wrought up to an extraordinary ſtate of belief, by the publication of the moſt incredible chain of incidents, that ever appeared in print. Have we never heard, Sir, of the names of Rodney, Barrington, Hotham, Macartney, Vaughan, or Campbell, and the many other great and reſpectable characters, who were examined before the Committee of the Houſe of Commons, and gave ample teſtimony to the comfortable ſituation of the Negroes in the Weſt Indies? Is the evidence of thoſe Gentlemen (to make uſe of the phraſe of an Honourable Member of this Houſe) *to be ſet at nought*, and are we not to give full credit and belief to the

the words of men, to whom their country, in a great meaſure, owes the importance and weight ſhe at preſent poſſeſſes among the nations of Europe? For my part, Sir, I was filled with indignation at the very idea of drawing the opinions of ſuch illuſtrious characters, into compariſon with the evidence of thoſe on the oppoſite ſide, upon the diſcuſſion of the ſubject laſt year, and I lamented exceedingly, that I was not then in a ſituation to give my ſentiments upon it.

I come now, Mr. Chairman, to ſpeak of the value and importance of the Weſt Indian and African Trades to Great Britain. It is not my intention, Sir, to take up the time of the Committee, with an account of the revenue ariſing to government from the importation of the product of our Weſt India Iſlands, as probably I may be told by ſome of the politicians of the preſent day, that a ſimilar importation from Oſtend or Havre, would in that reſpect be attended with the ſame advantages to Great Britain; I will therefore, Sir, confine myſelf to our Trade and Navigation to the Colonies and to Africa, and will be glad to aſk ſuch Gentlemen, as are pleaſed to pay proper attention to the ſubject, if the exporter to, and the importer from, the Britiſh Weſt India Iſlands and Africa, amounting on the whole to upwards of ten millions ſterling annually, the giving employment to 300,000 tons of ſhipping, and about 25,000 ſeamen, are not objects of the utmoſt importance to Great Britain? The Gentlemen who had acted ſo very hoſtile a part to the intereſt of the Colonies, may now, as on a former occaſion, conſider theſe objects greatly over-rated, but as I deal in matters of fact, and *in facts only*, I will be bound to make what I advance appear well founded, and to the entire ſatisfaction of this Honourable Houſe, when, and in whatever manner, they are pleaſed to order me.

Having mentioned, Mr. Chairman, in as conciſe and intelligible a manner as I am maſter of, the value and importance of our Weſt Indian and African trade; I am now to ſpeak of ſome of the authorities upon which our claims are founded, of the dependence of the Colonies upon the African Trade, and of the injuſtice and impolicy of the preſent queſtion. Although it is too much the faſhion of the preſent times, to prefer the opinions of retired and ſpeculative philoſophers, to the wiſe colonial ſyſtem, that has been eſtabliſhed by our forefathers, and by which this country and the Colonies have thriven; yet

I am convinced, that the preſent Parliament are too much awake to the zeal and true intereſts of Great Britain, not to pay proper attention to the encouragement and protection that has been given to the Weſt India Colonies, and to the African Trade, ſince their firſt eſtabliſhment. It would take up too much of the time of this Honourable Houſe to go fully into the authority; I will therefore confine myſelf to a few, and being very much unaccuſtomed to ſpeaking in public, I muſt crave the permiſſion of the Honourable Committee, to call in the aid of written information, and to requeſt of the Clerk to read occaſionally, ſuch parts of the ſeveral Acts and Reſolutions, as apply moſt immediately to the ſubject of debate. The acts and declarations of the Britiſh Legiſlature, that are moſt material to the queſtion before the Honourable Houſe, may very properly be claſſed under theſe different heads, viz.

1ſt. Such as declare the ſaid Colonies, and the Trade thereof, advantageous to Great Britain, and therefore entitled to her protection and encouragement.

2dly. Such as authorize, protect, and encourage, the Trade to Africa, as advantageous in itſelf, and neceſſary to the welfare and exiſtence of the Sugar Colonies.

3dly. Such as promote and ſecure loans of money to the Proprietors at the ſaid Colonies, either from Britiſh ſubjects or from Foreigners.

The ſeveral Acts are as follow, viz.

In the Firſt Claſs, are the following, viz.

15 Car. II. cap. 7. 22 & 23 Car. II. cap. 26. 7 & 8 W. cap. 22. 9 & 10 W. III. cap. 23. 3 & 4 Ann. 6 Ann. cap. 30. 6 Geo. II. cap. 13. 12 Geo. II. cap. 30. 27 Geo. III. cap. 27.

In the Second Claſs are the following, viz.

1662 Cha. II. 1672 cap. 2. 9 & 10 Will. & Mary, cap. 26. 5 Geo. III. cap. 44. 20 Geo. III. cap. 65. 27 Geo. III. cap. 27.

In the Third Claſs are the following, viz.

5 Geo. II. cap. 7. 13 Geo. III. cap. 14. 14 Geo. III. cap. 79.

If

If there is, Mr. Chairman, any dependence whatever to be placed upon the Acts of the Britiſh Legiſlature, the few authorities I have quoted, will, I am perſuaded, operate upon the minds of the unprejudiced Members of this Honourable Houſe, and of the community at large, in ſo forcible a manner, as to afford every reaſonable hope for the moſt perfect ſecurity to our properties. They appear to me, Sir, unanſwerable, and even to preclude the neceſſity of uſing any farther argument upon the ſubject; but as we have experienced a want of candour on the part of our opponents, that could hardly have been expected, I muſt once more treſpaſs on the goodneſs of the Honourable Committee, by requeſting their attention to the encouragement and protection that have been given to the Weſt India Colonies, and to the African Trade, from the reign of Charles II. down to the preſent times, and eſpecially during the reign of Queen Anne.

That reign, Mr. Chairman, which may very well be called the Auguſtan age of Great Britain, was diſtinguiſhed by the appearance of the moſt enlightened characters in all departments, that ever any country produced; many of them remarkable for their piety and learning, and whoſe writings will live for ages, after the wretched productions of the miſerable ſchiſmatics of the preſent day are buried in oblivion. Yet, Sir, we do not find in the Parliamentary Hiſtory of thoſe days, or in any other writings that we know of, the leaſt tendency to ſuch wild and deſtructive doctrines as the preſent. No, Mr. Chairman, they were reſerved for this age of novelty and innovation; and from the temper and diſpoſition of a certain deſcription of people, which are amply manifeſted by the publications of the moſt inflammatory and dangerous tendency with which our daily papers are crowded, I am perfectly ſatisfied that the queſtion before this Honourable Houſe, is only an introduction to greater evils. The Weſt Indies, Sir, is the moſt vulnerable part of our dominions, and being at a diſtance, and having no intereſt in Parliament, is of courſe the moſt likely to become an eaſy object of prey to artful and deſigning men. However, Mr. Chairman, our brethen in thoſe Iſlands being the ſons of Britons, and their forefathers having carried acroſs the Atlantic Ocean all the rights and privileges that pertain to Britiſh ſubjects, you may reſt perfectly ſatisfied that they will not tamely ſubmit to being robbed of every thing that is near and dear to

them. The aboliſhing the African Slave Trade, will be an abſolute breach of the compact that ties the colonies to the mother country, and being founded on juſtice, and contrary to the ſpirit and meaning of the laws of England, will meet with univerſal reſiſtance. I am, Sir, perfectly well acquainted with the temper and diſpoſitions of the inhabitants of our Weſt India iſlands; they poſſeſs abilities, having in general received the beſt education this country affords, and having a lively and juſt ſenſe of their own rights and privileges. I conſider it my duty, as a moſt hearty well-wiſher to the true intereſts of this country and its colonies, to inform this Honourable Houſe, that it is not in the power of Great Britain to prevent the introduction of Negroes into the Britiſh Weſt India Iſlands.

A ſerious attention to the ſeveral Acts I have mentioned, and to the many other authorities with which our books are filled, muſt fully convince every unprejudiced Member of this Honourable Houſe, and the community at large, that the laws in exiſtence have given as perfect ſecurity to the lives and fortunes of his Majeſty's ſubjects in the Weſt India Iſlands, as they do to his ſubjects in Great Britain; and that their property cannot be meddled with or diminiſhed in any ſhape whatever, without full and ample compenſation. If Great Britain, Sir, is in a ſituation to purchaſe the fee ſimple of the property in all our Iſlands, I, for one, have no manner of objection to the making of a bargain; but, Sir, how is the value to be eſtimated? Why, by a jury of the vicinity, agreeable to the principles of the laws of England and of the Colonies; for I can aſſure the Honourable Committee, that we are not at all in a diſpoſition to have that material point aſcertained by the diſcretionary opinions of the Honourable Gentleman's friends in the Old Jewry. However, Sir, to ſpeak more ſeriouſly upon the ſubject, have not this Honourable Houſe before them full and ſatisfactory information of every circumſtance with regard to our Weſt India Colonies? Do not the Report of the Committee of Privy Council, and that immenſe body of evidence that was taken before a Committee of this Honourable Houſe, and which now lie on your table, tell you moſt poſitively, that our preſent ſtock of Negroes cannot be kept up without an importation from Africa, and that if the African Trade is aboliſhed, there is an end of every ſpecies of improvement in all our Iſlands? How are the proprietors of lands in the ceded

Iſlands,

Iſlands, which were purchaſed of Government under ſpecific conditions of ſettlement, to be indemnified? and what is to become of an Honourable Friend of mine, now a Member of this Honourable Houſe, and ſitting near me, who with another Gentleman and myſelf, purchaſed the lands that were granted by the Crown to General Monckton, in the iſland of St. Vincent, in the year 1773 or 1774, in conſequence of the Addreſs of the Houſe of Commons of that day to his Majeſty, and as a reward for that gallant General's military ſervices? The American war, which immediately ſucceeded our purchaſe, prevented our making any progreſs in the ſale of theſe lands until the year 1784. Our ſales then commenced, and went on briſkly until the year 1788, when it was firſt known that a plan was in agitation for aboliſhing the African Slave Trade. Since that period, Sir, we have done little or nothing, and we have 1500 acres of the land on hand, which will be of no value whatever if the preſent queſtion is carried.

Will any Gentleman, either in or out of Parliament, pretend to ſay, that we have not a juſt and equitable claim, upon the Government of this country, for full and ample compenſation? However, Sir, waving for a moment the unfaſhionable doctrine of colonial rights, how can compenſation be made to the many thouſand manufacturers, who at preſent find employment in providing the numberleſs articles, that are daily wanted for the uſe and conſumption of the Weſt India Iſlands, and who muſt ſooner or later experience the diſtreſs and inconveniences that muſt attend the preſent phrenzy, if the colonies are ſuffered to go to ruin. Is there a ſhoe, is there a ſtocking, is there a hat, or is there a yard of cloth of any kind, uſed by the Inhabitants of our Iſlands, that are not manufactured in Great Britain? Nay the very implements of huſbandry, and proviſions and luxuries that are neceſſary for the conſumption of our tables, go from this country, and that at a conſiderable expence of freſh commiſſions and inſurance, every ſhilling of which centers in Great Britain. Is not the whole ſurplus revenue of our eſtates ſpent here, and are not our children educated in this country, and inſtructed in thoſe principles of affection and loyalty, that have ever made them conſider Great Britain as their home? And let me, Sir, be permitted to aſk the moſt inveterate of our foes, if we ever have, by any act of ſedition or rebellion, forfeited in the ſmalleſt degree the countenance

and protection, which as ſons of Britain, and ſubjects of the ſame good and gracious Sovereign, we are moſt unqueſtionably intitled to. I maintain, Sir, that we have not: and therefore as a Coloniſt and in the name of the Britiſh Weſt-India Colonies, I demand of the Parliament of Great Britain, that ſupport and protection, which, upon the principles of good policy and faith, they are in duty bound to afford us, in common with the reſt of his Majeſty's loyal ſubjects. There is ſtill, Mr. Chairman, a conſideration attending the queſtion now before this Honourable Houſe, of full as much importance as any I have mentioned, and that is the fatal effects a diminution of our trade would have upon the navigation of Great Britain. Does it not appear, Sir, by the evidence now lying on our table, that the Weſt-India trade is conſidered a moſt excellent nurſery for ſeamen, and that in all the wars we have of late been engaged in, have been found to be the moſt active, and uſeful body of men, in his Majeſty's navy? For my part, Sir, conſidering the navy as our beſt and moſt natural defence, I am one of thoſe who think, that ſeamen ought to be made, by all poſſible means; and upon that principle, Sir, I contend that the trade to Africa ſhould meet with every encouragement that this country can give it. Indeed I am ſo great an enthuſiaſt for the increaſe of our navigation and ſeamen, that while I have the honour of being a Member of this Houſe, I never will give my conſent to any meaſure, be it at what it will, that can poſſibly tend to the leſſening of our number of ſeamen *one man*, no Sir, *not one man*; and this I hold to be ſound conſtitutional doctrine, and thoſe who are of a different opinion, I will ever conſider as ignorant of the true intereſts of Great Britain, and enemies to its welfare and proſperity.

Mr. VAUGHAN. I riſe, Mr. Chairman, for the firſt time of ſpeaking in this Houſe, to remove ſome prejudices reſpecting the Colonies, the conduct and circumſtances of which have been involved in the queſtion relative to the Slave Trade, and complicated with it by the Honourable Gentleman, who has brought forward the queſtion, and by others. The treatment

of

of Negroes in the Weſt Indies, has been ſtated as an objection to the ſending of any more to thoſe iſlands. It becomes therefore neceſſary to endeavour to remove the prejudices that prevail, and as I am a Weſt Indian by birth, and am connected with the iſlands by profeſſion and private fortune, having property in the Weſt Indies, I can ſpeak from my own teſtimony, and from the evidence of my own ſenſes: but I ſhall not dwell long upon the ſubject, though it is my intention to take rather a wide view of it. With reſpect to my being a Merchant, it is my pride. I prefer independence to every other condition, and though I might have profited by the friendſhip of perſons of conſiderable rank in this country, I chooſe to be the architect of my own fortune. In the early part of my life, I own, no man was more ſtrongly in favour of the Abolition of the Slave Trade than I was. I was educated by a Gentleman well known in the world of letters, by Dr. Prieſtley, and by the father of Mrs. Barbauld, who were both of them intimately acquainted with the Weſt India Hiſtory, and friends to the idea of Abolition. Their ſentiments I had imbibed, but although bred at the feet of Gamaliel, having reſolved to judge for myſelf, I left England, and went to Jamaica. There I ſoon found my notions ſhaken, and my ſyſtems embarraſſed. A ſtate of civilization creates wants of the mind merely, whereas a ſtate of ſlavery regards only thoſe of the body. The Slaves, therefore, would not exert themſelves eaſily for hire, and I found the Negroes by no means in a condition fit to receive civilization. Next to my father's eſtate were ſeveral Maroon Negroes, a people who refuſe to do any work whatever, but throw all the labour on their wives. The whites alſo, I ſoon ſaw, could not replace the Negroes by working in the field; a fact which the Sierra Leone Company have themſelves acknowledged, in oppoſition to the aſſertion of Mr. Ramſay. In confirmation of this remark, I beg leave to read from the Report of the Sierra Leone Company the following quotation, viz. "The impoſſibility of finding any Europeans who can work in Africa in the ſun, without the utmoſt prejudices to their health, has made the Directors conceive it to be their duty to diſcourage labourers from hence, who would go out with this view." I found the ſituation of the Negroes in the Weſt Indies much better than I could have imagined. The poor in all countries are hardly uſed, and the

Negroes

Negroes cannot be ſuppoſed to be in an elevated ſituation; but excepting with reſpect to their liberty, I will venture to ſay, they are in plight and neceſſaries as well off as the poor in this and ſuch other countries in Europe as I have ſeen. They have little want of clothes or fuel, from the warmth of the climate; they have a houſe and land *gratis*; no ſuch thing as impriſonment for debts exiſts there, and they are not deterred from marrying through fear of not being able to ſupport a family; their orphans and widows are always taken care of, as they themſelves are when old, or when they meet with accidents. Phyſic, ſurgery, midwifery, and attendance, are furniſhed *gratis*, ſo that no poor laws are requiſite for their ſupport. They have their private property, which no maſter ever takes from them; and were perfectly reſigned, at the time when I was abroad, to their ſituation, and looked for nothing beyond it. An anecdote that came to my knowledge, will ſerve to evince their reſignation: a ſlave being idle, was reproved by his overſeer, who ſaid, "For what purpoſe do you think your maſter purchaſed you, but to work for him?" The queſtion was unanſwerable, and the ſlave was ſilent, and immediately began to work. Negroes form the labouring poor of the iſlands; and with reſpect to neceſſaries, they appear as happy as any other poor, have as many amuſements of their own, and as much chearfulneſs. Perhaps perſons may have been prejudiced by living in towns to which Negroes were often ſent for puniſhment, and where there were many ſmall proprietors, or by ſeeing no Negro otherwiſe than as one of the labouring poor. It is cruel to ſay, as Mr. Ramſay has done, that they have only four or five hours to themſelves in the four and twenty; for this is not enough for ſleep, much leſs for their night rambles; and it has been ſtated that they will go about in the courſe of the night to a conſiderable diſtance. On the whole, they want nothing but liberty, and it is only occaſionally that they ſuffer cruelties. As to Africa, there ſeems to be no way at preſent of preventing her ſupplying freſh ſlaves, ſo that I ſaw no means of correcting what is wrong even in the importation of ſlaves, unleſs from a change of the ſpirit of the times; not being a miniſter, and not having poſſeſſion of an Alexander's ſword to cut the Gordian knot by force, in the face of the Acts of Parliament, and without providing indemnity to thoſe concerned. Thus I felt and reaſoned, when in the iſlands.

I cannot

I cannot omit to notice a ſet of prejudices reſpecting the Colonies. As, firſt, that it is nothing but cruelty which occaſions the inequality of deaths and births. Is it cruelty that occaſions the ſuperiority of deaths to births in the great city of London; or in particular claſſes of people in all places, as domeſtic ſervants, ſoldiers, &c.? It is owing to the celibacy or diſeaſe, according to the caſe. Among the Negroes, it is owing to the plan formerly prevailing, of having more males than females imported, and to the diſſoluteneſs of theſe people, as well as to the diſeaſes peculiar to themſelves, eſpecially among the children, whoſe frequent deaths, on a particular date from their birth, and their doing well in general, if they ſurvive that date, cannot be owing to cruelty. The two opinions appear to be contradictory, that the Negroes are waſting from cruelty, and yet that they increaſe ſo as to make farther importation ſuperfluous. With regard to population, even in thoſe iſlands which nearly keep up their numbers by procreation, there is this difficulty, that the equality is preſerved by the increaſe on one eſtate, compenſating for loſſes upon another; and theſe eſtates will not interchange their numbers. Whereas, where freedom prevails, the free labourers circulate from one employer to another, and appear wherever they are wanted. In ſmall eſtates, or ſmall iſlands, any calamity makes a deep and permanent impreſſion on population, ſuch as famine, plague, ſmall-pox, or war; which is exemplified in Indian tribes, and proved by many caſes in hiſtory. Some of theſe cauſes have lately operated in the Weſt Indies. This is a point to be allowed for. All chaſtiſement alſo with reſpect to Negroes is not cruelty. The owners of ſlaves generally withdraw them from all public juſtice; ſo that criminals, who would be publicly executed elſewhere, are often kept alive by their maſter, and liable to be found puniſhed again and again for repeating their faults. Diſtributive juſtice occaſions many puniſhments, as one ſlave is to be protected againſt every other ſlave; and when one ſlave pilfers from another, then the maſter interferes. The care of the Negroes themſelves, as to their health, proviſions, clothing, family, and the like, occaſions other puniſhments. All this is to be diſtinguiſhed from puniſhments to enforce labour, or ariſing from cruelty. So far are the Negroes from being neglected, that infinite anxiety occurs with many maſ-

ters

ters about their ſlaves, whom they often viſit in perſon when in ſickneſs; and the evidence before the Houſe has ſtated, that nine pounds ſterling have been given for attending a difficult caſe in midwifery. Many diſeaſes are new to Europeans in the Iſlands, and require time to admit of a plan of cure. This diminution of numbers in the Negroes in the Colonies may happen without cruelty, as I hope I have proved, and ſuch diminution at preſent there certainly is. Circumſtances of a very different kind, reſpecting the Colonies, require ſome notice to prevent miſconſtruction.

The objections which ſome perſons have to conſuming ſugar when it comes from the Weſt Indies, becauſe it is made by ſlaves, are liable to produce miſchief; which it is worth obviating, by obſerving, that whereas indigo, for example, is a plant which has no offals, and is good for neither man nor beaſt, ſugar on the other hand, is an article of cultivation known to be favourable to both; and it is undoubtedly, therefore, more advantageous for the Negroes themſelves to be employed in cultivating ſugar than other articles. Another objection is, that the crops of the Sugar Colonies are ſubject to many caſualties, which make them precarious objects of attention to the mother country; but it ſhould be remembered, that gentlemen here have farmers interpoſed between themſelves and the fluctuation of their crops; whereas in the Iſlands, the Planters in general hold their eſtates in hand, cultivate them themſelves, and therefore feel every variation of crops. A third objection is, that the Coloniſts are monopoliſts, and ſell ſugar dear, and get great profits. The Colony-ſyſtem, which is a mutual monopoly between Great Britain on the one hand, and the Colonies on the other, may indeed have given advantages to ſome Planters; but other Planters have purchaſed from the firſt comers, ſo as to have bare profits left to them at preſent; and as to any private monopoly among individuals for keeping up the price of Weſt India articles, I deny that it exiſts, or even that it can exiſt, the number of ſellers being ſo great, as to enſure a free competition.

On the whole, to revert to the Negroes, I myſelf have gone over the iſlands, from one end to the other, and I have ſeen little of the great cruelty to Negroes taken of; none at all on the eſtate where I reſided; and the whip, the ſtocks, and

and confinement, are all that I have obſerved in other places; and I have been on the iſland ſeven months. Some Slaves belonging to my father's eſtate once brought me ſome pine-apples; as I did not chuſe to give them their price, they took them away. In fact, my father's own Slaves, when they received money for over-hours, ſpent it in their own way, not uſually coming home at their dinner hour, but taking their own time at ſupper.

Notwithſtanding all that I have ſaid, I acknowledge there is room for much amendment. I wiſh thoſe perſons who complain of the Coloniſts would be ſo good as to do us the ſervice of going out to the iſlands, and would themſelves teach the Planters how to take care of their eſtates, and preſerve the Negroes; I am perſuaded many Planters are ready to ſell their properties to them at advantageous prices. Miſſionaries, ſome of the Clergy for inſtance, at preſent in the gallery, and witneſſes of the debate, might make themſelves of the utmoſt uſe in the iſlands. The Catholics in the Ceded Iſlands, and the Moravians at Antigua, have each of them been of great benefit; and many Planters, and ſeveral of the Local Houſes of Aſſembly, have recommended attention to this ſubject. Where religion is once inſtilled, there will be leſs puniſhment, more work, and that work will be better done; more marriages, more iſſue, and more attachment to their maſters and to the government.

Another article of much importance, would be the founding of Medical Societies. Medical men have often much enthuſiaſm, more than in moſt other profeſſions; and certainly more than in the church, or the law, or the army. Their communications would contribute greatly to the public benefit. They have many new diſeaſes to encounter, among the Negroes in the iſlands, there being no ancient practice, nor knowledge derived from neighbouring countries, to aſſiſt them.—The diſeaſes of Negro infants are particularly worthy their attention, for I believe no remedy is yet known for the great diſeaſe by which infants are carried off in ſuch prodigious numbers.

Taſk-work is another improvement, which I wiſh to have introduced. The inconveniences of it may eaſily be avoided, I mean the ſtraining the Negro too much at one time, and giving

giving him too much idle time at his command in conſequence, at another, &c. &c.

Premiums have been given to mothers and to overſeers, for the number of children reared by them; but *fathers* have hitherto been forgotten, who may contribute much to this neceſſary work. To premiums may be added honorary diſtinctions, and ſeveral ſolid advantages to the Negro, which nevertheleſs might coſt nothing to the owner.

Negro evidence ſhould be allowed to be given in courts of law, it being left to the diſcretion of the court or jury to accept or reject it, according to the nature of the caſe.

Cruel maſters ought to be kept in order, in various ways. They ſhould be liable to have their Negroes taken from them, and put into truſt. Every inſtrument of puniſhment ſhould be baniſhed except the whip, confinement being alſo permitted. A limitation of the number of laſhes ſhould alſo be made, and this puniſhment ſhould not be repeated till after due intervals. Thirty-nine laſhes ſhould be ſubſtituted for four-ſcore. Perhaps even the whip will ſoon be found to be uſeleſs. It is a miſtake to ſuppoſe any danger from making examples of white perſons who oppreſs their Slaves. Juſtice is of the firſt conſequence; and general principles are of more importance than any attention to individuals. But in ſhort, we muſt not heſitate; the thing muſt be. The public expect it. The character of exemplary Coloniſts is hurt by being confounded with that of lower and baſer men. It is terrible to think how far this principle of partiality in ſheltering the whites may be carried, which yet in effect, is never meant to extend farther than is *neceſſary to ſecure the ſervices of the Slave on one ſide, and his protection on the other.* Mr. Locke, indeed, in his Conſtitution of Carolina, ſays, that the authority and power of the maſter is abſolute; but he is obliged to leave the Slave at leaſt the choice of his religion, as well as the liberty of attending it.*

If

* Since charity obliges us to wiſh well to the ſouls of men, and religion ought to alter nothing in any man's civil eſtate, or right, it ſhall be lawful for Slaves, as well as others, to enter themſelves, and be of what church or profeſſion any of them ſhall think beſt, and thereof be as fully members as any freemen. But yet, no Slave ſhall hereby be exempted from that civil dominion his

If the Abolition of the Slave Trade ſhould be determined upon, I truſt ſome attention will be paid to indemnification. Without going farther into the ſubject at preſent, I requeſt it may not be forgotten that many thouſand acres have been ſold in the Ceded Iſlands, for 6, or 700,000l. and that many hundred thouſand acres have long paid quit-rents in Jamaica, though not fully cultivated. The only indemnity wanted is for the want of labourers; give them labourers and you give them an indemnity in kind. If free labourers can be found, the Planters will be glad to uſe them; for they only want labour, whether paid for daily or otherwiſe. They do not want ſlaves, for the ſake of tyrannizing over them. Perhaps it will prove, after all, that it is from African labourers, free or otherwiſe, that the whole of the parts of America, now unſettled, will finally be peopled.

I beg leave to conclude, by aſking, whether the Honourable Mover will ſuffer this queſtion to be divided; namely, to let firſt, the queſtion for the Abolition be put without regard to limitation; and then let the queſtion of termination be put ſeparately afterwards.

Mr. WILBERFORCE. I am happy to find, that, though the Honourable Gentleman does not think with me that an *immediate* Abolition ought to take place, ſtill he is of an opinion an *Abolition* ſhould take place.

his maſter hath over him, but in all other things in the ſame condition he was in before.

Every freeman of Carolina ſhall have abſolute power and authority over his Negro Slaves, of what opinion or religion ſoever.

Mr.

Mr. H. THORNTON. I confeſs to you, Sir, I have felt ſome kind of regret, that the perſons who appear this day to ſtand the moſt forward in oppoſing the motion of my Honourable Friend, ſhould both of them be mercantile Gentlemen, both of them alſo declaring themſelves to be conſiderably intereſted in the queſtion. I was in hopes that ſome more political perſons might have led that ſide of the debate, and that I might have been ſpared the mortification of ſeeing the commercial character diſcredited; as it muſt be, if commercial Gentlemen are to take the lead in oppoſing the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

I believe an opinion has already gone forth in this country, that on the one ſide of the preſent queſtion are all the thinking, the diſintereſted, the liberal, the more virtuous part of the community, as well as all the chief political characters of the country; and that on the other ſide a mere narrow mercantile intereſt is oppoſed to them. For the ſake, therefore, of our mercantile reputation and honour, I, who conſider myſelf as one of that body, could undoubtedly have wiſhed that the odium of ſupporting this horrid trade might not light ſo peculiarly upon us.

It appears to me, that not one word of all that has fallen from the two Honourable Gentlemen who ſpoke laſt, applies in reality to the *main queſtion* before the Committee; and it is a circumſtance extremely obſervable, that the two Honourable Gentlemen, who ſeem to lead the oppoſition to the motion before you, ſhould both of them have either quite neglected or purpoſely avoided to touch at all on that point on which my Honourable Friend, both now and on every former occaſion, has reſted the whole ſtreſs of his argument.

They have neither of them, in any one part of their ſpeeches, ſo much as adverted *to the manner of procuring Slaves on the coaſt of Africa*, and this my Honourable Friend has always ſtated to be the very jet of the whole queſtion. They both have urged it upon the Houſe, that the Slaves are well uſed in the Weſt Indies, and that more importations are wanted; but it really does not ſeem to have occurred to them, nor to have made *any part of their conſideration*, whether theſe freſh Slaves are got from Africa by fair and proper means, or whether they are obtained (as has been charged upon them) by rapine, robbery, and murder.

The

The chief ſubſtance of the ſpeeches of the two Honourable Gentlemen, appears to me to have been this: The one Honourable Gentleman argued that the Slaves were *ſufficiently happy*, according to the preſent ſyſtem, in the Weſt Indies; the other Honourable Gentleman pointed out a great variety of particulars by which *much improvement* might be made in their condition. In this reſpect, we quite agree with the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt. We ſay, as he does, that a variety of meaſures may be taken for the advantage of the Slaves, and the improvement of their population. We agree with him, that theſe improvements have been *ſpeculated* upon, and by ſome individual Gentlemen, *in their cloſets*, have ſeriouſly been thought of. But then we ſay alſo, that it is nothing, in fact, but the Abolition of the Slave Trade, that will reduce theſe ſpeculations into *practice*; and that the æra of its Abolition will be the æra of beginning this new ſyſtem, which nothing ſhort of this will induce the Weſt Indians in good earneſt to accompliſh. The one Honourable Gentleman tells us, that he has been over to the Weſt Indies for the ſake of knowing the real ſtate of things there. The other Honourable Gentleman tells us, he alſo has reſided there. It is the *Weſt Indies*, and the Weſt Indies only, that they ſpeak of; for neither the one nor the other of them appears, ever for one moment, even in imagination, to have travelled to *Africa*.

The dreadful injuſtice of this trade conſiſts in the African part of the queſtion. Africa is to be ſtripped of its inhabitants, no matter by what means, in order to ſupply a population that is ſaid to be wanted in the Weſt Indies. And thus the Honourable Gentlemen have reminded me of the Dutch proverb, "My ſon, get money, honeſtly if you can—but get money." The proverb, indeed, is improved in the preſent inſtance, by the ſubſtitution of a word, which renders it a thouſand times more profligate; for the preſent maxim is, "Get *Slaves*, honeſtly if you can—but get Slaves."

I wiſh as much as the two Honourable Gentlemen who ſpoke laſt, to conſider this queſtion in a mercantile point of view. But when I ſay this, I do not mean in a narrow, ſelfiſh, or perſonal view, but on the liberal and enlarged principles of national commerce.

It happens in trade as it does in every other profeſſion o life, that there are certain individuals, and perhaps certain branches of the profeſſion, that are a ſcandal and diſgrace to it; and that man, Sir, is, in my opinion, the beſt friend to his profeſſion, whatever his profeſſion be, who endeavours to ſeparate every thing in it that is fair and juſt and legitimate, from every thing that is irregular and illegitimate ; who diſtinguiſhes what is honourable from what is vile, and fairly ſurrenders up to the juſt condemnation of Parliament and of the country, every practice and every principle of his profeſſion, which is found to be inconſiſtent with the dictates of humanity and juſtice. I think that I am doing a ſervice to that profeſſion, to which I conſider myſelf as belonging, by this obſervation ; and that I am thus reſcuing commerce itſelf from the foul imputations under which it labours, by the endeavours that have been made to conſider the Slave Trade as a neceſſary link in the chain, or an eſſential part of the national commerce.

It cannot be neceſſary that I ſhould enter much at length into the nature of this trade, and the manner of its being carried on in Africa. My Honourable Friend has eſtabliſhed this part of his queſtion beyond all controverſy. He has this day added to all the other maſs of evidence, two or three farther ſtories of enormities committed in Africa, inſomuch that I ſhould think that no man in the Houſe, commercial or not commercial, could have failed to be deeply impreſſed by them. The Honourable Gentlemen, however, ſeem to have taken no notice of them, and to remain ſtill unmoved by any thing that relates to the African part of the queſtion.

Happening, however, in my ſituation of a Director of the Sierra Leone Company, to become a good deal acquainted with ſome circumſtances that reſpect the Slave Trade in that part, although the ſame kind of facts are already ſufficiently eſtabliſhed in the body of evidence on your table, it may not be improper for me to enter, for a few minutes, into this ſubject. The Committee may thus perhaps be enabled, by a few familiar inſtances, to judge ſtill more clearly what is the nature of that trade which they are requeſted not to aboliſh.

I will firſt, however, premiſe, that what I am going to mention are facts coming within the actual view of the perſon from

from whom I had them.—That they have ariſen ſince the laſt year's deciſion on this ſubject. —That they have all come within the obſervation of one ſingle individual; have happened in the ſpace of about three or four months, on one ſide of the river Sierra Leone, and within half a mile or a mile of the little town where the Agent of the Sierra Leone Company was then living. I may alſo obſerve, that the particular part of Africa which I am ſpeaking of, has been by no means charged in the evidence with being a ſcene of peculiar violence; on the contrary, my Honourable Friend ſeems to have had rather leſs ſuſpicion of the prevalence of kidnapping, and of other outrages, in this than in moſt other parts. Will the Houſe then accept of this as a ſpecimen of what the African Slave Trade is? and will they judge of the other parts, where the ſame minute information is wanting, by this ſample?

Mr. Falconbridge, Agent to the Sierra Leone Company, ſitting one evening in the town of the free ſettlers, who went out ſome years ago from England, heard a great ſhout, and immediately afterwards the report of a gun. Fearing an attack upon his little ſettlement, he inſtantly armed forty of the ſettlers, and ruſhed with them to the place from whence the ſound came; he found a poor wretch, who had been croſſing over from a neighbouring town, in the hands of a party of kidnappers, who were tying his hands; and it appeared that the ſhout and the report of the gun were the expreſſions of joy at having had the good luck to catch the man: Although this unhappy wretch was ſhrieking bitterly, the Company's Agent could not think of reſcuing him, knowing that, from the defenceleſs ſtate of his own town, retaliation might be made on the ſettlers reſiding there. Another perſon, who was an eye-witneſs to this ſcene, confirmed the ſtory to me.

On another day a young woman, living half a mile off, was ſold, without any criminal charge whatever, to one of the ſlave ſhips. She was well acquainted with our Agent's wife, and had been with her the day before. Her cries were heard, but it was impoſſible to reſcue her; and ſhe therefore is gone to *improve the population of the Weſt Indies*.

At another time, a young lad, about ſixteen years of age, himſelf one of the free ſettlers who went from England, was

caught by a neighbouring chief, two or three miles off, as he was ſtraggling alone from home, and ſold for a ſlave, charged with no crime or fault whatever. The pretext was, that ſome one elſe in the town had committed an offence, and the firſt perſon who could be found was ſeized in conſequence; being ſeen in his chains before he was got to the ſhip, he was happily recovered by the free ſettlers ſeizing and threatening to ſell a man of the ſame town where the chief reſided.

In order to mark to the Houſe, ſtill more forcibly, the ſcenes of domeſtic miſery to which the Slave Trade gives birth, I will now mention the caſe of one individual family, the only family that has come under my immediate view; and this alſo may ſerve as a familiar inſtance of the wretchedneſs, which, in a thouſand ſimilar caſes, the Slave Trade muſt, from its very nature, give occaſion to. I mean the family of king Naimbanna, the king or chief of that country; a man remarkable for the peaceableneſs of his diſpoſition, protected as much as any man can be protected from theſe violences; attached to his family, living as ſecurely as he can on his little iſland, wiſhing to keep peace, and to promote the happineſs of all around him. It has happened to this reſpectable perſon, in no leſs than three ſeparate inſtances, to have ſome branches of his family kidnapped, and carried off to the Weſt Indies. At one time three were decoyed on board ſhip, on pretence of buying ſomething of them, and carried off, no one knows whither, by a Daniſh ſlave ſhip. At another time, another relation was induced to pilot a ſlave veſſel down the river; he begged to be put on ſhore when he came oppoſite his own town, but he was preſſed to pilot her down to the mouth of the river. The Captain then pleaded the impracticability of putting him on ſhore, carried him to Jamaica, and actually ſold him for a ſlave; happily, however, a letter was conveyed by another veſſel to Jamaica immediately after, and the man, with ſome difficulty, having applied, as I underſtand, to the Governor of Jamaica, having proved that he was kidnapped, and having the advantage (which was a moſt material point) of being able to ſpeak Engliſh, was reſtored to his family at Sierra Leone.

Another connection of King Naimbanna was alſo kidnapped, and is now, no doubt, working under the whip of ſome Driver. He alſo is gone to increaſe the population of

our

our iſlands, and is doomed, like the reſt, to perpetual ſlavery in the Weſt Indies.

If the Honourable Gentleman over the way (Mr. Vaughan) will excuſe my troubling him for the printed Report of the Sierra Leone Company, out of which he has quoted one paſſage to the Houſe, I ſhould be glad to read from it part of a letter from King Naimbanna, addreſſed to Mr. Granville Sharp, on this ſubject. It is a part of the Report as much to the point in queſtion as that to which the Honourable Gentleman has confined his obſervation.

Mr. Vaughan having handed the book to Mr. H. Thornton, he read the following paſſage: "It has been told that theſe "people (the free ſettlers from England) would in time drive "me, by force of arms, back into the country, and take "my ports from me. I have received ſeveral accounts from "factories and Captains of ſhips (viz. ſlave factories and "ſlave Captains) againſt the ſettlement, which I took no "notice of, as I conceived it was, in my opinion, ſpite or "envy that they had againſt their living in the country; but "have ſerved them in any little requeſt they aſked of me, "and have endeavoured to keep peace between them and my "people, and alſo among themſelves, by ſettling a great "many diſquiets between them. It was pleaſure to do it, "as I thought they would become uſeful to us all in this "country, by teaching us things we know not; and com-"mon reaſon muſt tell, that the moſt ignorant people in the "world, would be glad to ſee their country made good, if "they had idea how it might be done. And again, I muſt "let you know, that if there were no other reaſon for my "wiſhing for the welfare of the ſettlement, I ſhould do it "that there might be ſtop put to the horrid depredations that "are ſo often committed in this country, by all countries "that come here to trade. There are three diſtant relations "of mine now in the Weſt Indies, carried away by one "Captain Cox, Captain of a Daniſh ſhip; their names as "follow: Corpro, Banna, and Morbour. Theſe were "taken out of my river Sierra Leone. I know not how to "get them back. I never hurt or deprived any perſon of "their right or property, or withheld from them what is "their due; ſo I only let you know of theſe lads, that there "will be an account taken of them one day or other.—I ever

" was partial to the people of Great Britain, for which cauſe " I have put up with a great deal of inſults from them, more " than I ſhould from any other country."

I will mention one other ſtory, of ſo horrible a nature as almoſt to exceed belief. It is the caſe of a ſon who ſold his own father, in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, for whom he got a conſiderable price; for as the father was rich in the number of his domeſtic ſlaves, it was not doubted that he would redeem himſelf almoſt at any price. The old man accordingly ſold twenty-two of his domeſtic ſlaves, as the price of his ranſom; and the reſt of his domeſtics, being from that time filled with apprehenſions of being on ſome ground or other ſold to the ſlave ſhips, fled from the dwelling of their maſter, to the mountains of Sierra Leone, where they now drag on a miſerable and precarious life. The ſon himſelf was ſold in his turn, ſoon after. In ſhort, the whole of that unhappy peninſula, as I learn from eye-witneſſes, has been deſolated by the trade in ſlaves. Towns are ſeen ſtanding without inhabitants, all along the coaſt, in ſeveral of which our Agent has been. Every man is armed, if he ſtirs from home. Formerly the country was in a ſtate much nearer to civilization. The old men at Sierra Leone will tell you, that before the Slave Trade had riſen, there were even ſome iron manufactories upon the coaſt: but every part acceſſible to the ſlave ſhips, appears to have become a ſcene of deſolation and ruin.

I hope, Sir, after what I have now ſaid, that the Houſe will think me fully juſtified in conſidering the preſent queſtion, not as if it were the *abolition of a trade*, but as the abolition of ſomething the *moſt oppoſite to trade* that can poſſibly be conceived. Unfortunately, the Slave Trade has got the name of a trade, and many people have been deceived by the mere expreſſion: ſo far from being a trade, it is abſolutely the reverſe of it! It is a *war*, it is not a *trade*. It is a *crime*, it is not a *commerce*. It is that which *prevents* the introduction of a *trade* into Africa, and this in a thouſand ways, as I could eaſily prove, if I were not afraid of treſpaſſing too far on the patience of this Committee. It is the moſt *anti-commercial* of any thing that can well be imagined; preventing even the introduction of thoſe antecedent meaſures towards the eſtabliſhment of a trade, which are in the firſt

place

place neceſſary. I will mention one circumſtance that has called up much of my attention, which might not commonly occur. The want of cultivation, as well as population, in thoſe parts which would naturally be choſen for an European ſettlement, is a circumſtance that exceedingly aggravates the unhealthineſs of that climate. It is only by clearing and cultivating the lands that the climate can be made healthy, and it is the Slave Trade that, by diſperſing the inhabitants of the coaſt, and cauſing the lands to remain uncultivated, makes the coaſt at preſent much more unhealthy than the interior parts. In ſhort, we have found, in attempting to ſettle our little colony, that it is the Slave Trade which forms our chief difficulty; that it is an obſtacle which oppoſes itſelf to us in a thouſand ways; that it creates more difficulty and embarraſſment than all the natural impediments, and is more hard to contend with than any difficulties of climate, ſoil, or natural diſpoſitions of the people.

I think I may fairly ſay, therefore, that it is on commercial principles, and as wiſhing well to the commercial intereſt of this country, that I plead for its abolition.

Having ſaid ſo much on the commercial part of this ſubject, there is one other ground on which I will ſay a few words; and I am the more induced to do it, becauſe I think my Honourable Friend was rather ſhort upon this part of his argument. I ſpeak of the *opinion of the people of this country*, which has lately begun to ſhew itſelf. I do not wiſh to turn this too much into a conſtitutional queſtion, being of opinion, that perhaps we are too apt in this Houſe to conſider every queſtion we argue as ſome way affecting the conſtitution. I will, however, make this plain obſervation, that it is of the utmoſt conſequence to the maintenance of the conſtitution of this country, that the *reputation of Parliament* ſhould be maintained. The people, and eſpecially the more thinking and virtuous part of the community, conſider this as a queſtion that addreſſes itſelf to their *conſciences*; and they are not likely to deſiſt from petitioning this Houſe. Nothing, therefore can more prejudice the character of Parliament in the country—in no way can we give a greater handle to thoſe who wiſh ill to the preſent conſtitution, than by any vote of our's, that ſhould lead the people to entertain an opinion, that the *Legiſlative* Body of this country is the *more corrupt*

part of it. It is of the utmoſt importance that we ſhould not be thought by our conſtituents ſlow to adopt principles of juſtice, or more deaf than they are themſelves to the voice of humanity. The people have ſhown, by the terms which may be ſeen in their petitions, as well as the petitions themſelves, that they do not conſider this queſtion merely in the light, in which the Honourable Gentlemen who ſpoke laſt, ſeemed to have conſidered it; but they feel a *guilt* attaching itſelf to them, ſo long as this trade laſts; and from this guilt it is, that they pray us, their repreſentatives, to deliver them. It ſeems to me, in this view of the queſtion, that it is a very ſerious ſubject indeed.

It has been ſometimes inſinuated, that Parliament, by interfering in this trade, departs from its proper functions. No idea can be more abſurd or falſe than this. Why are we ſent to Parliament? Is not the correction of abuſes among all the ſubjects over whom we have authority, the proper buſineſs of the Legiſlature? To watch over the various abuſes as they ariſe in the ſeveral profeſſions of life, and to make from time to time freſh laws for their correction, is our proper, and even our daily and ordinary buſineſs. There are many evils, which, from their diſtance or inſignificance, eſcape our notice at firſt; but when they are grown into conſequence, it is then that the Legiſlature notices them, and thinks itſelf indiſpenſibly bound to interfere. In every view of the ſubject, therefore, I moſt heartily ſupport the motion of my Honourable Friend. I wiſh for the Abolition of this Trade, Firſt, as I have ſtated, for the ſake of the *commercial honour* and the *commercial intereſt* of this country: I wiſh for its abolition ſtill more, becauſe I wiſh to maintain the *good fame and reputation of Parliament*, on which ſo materially depends the maintenance of our happy conſtitution: but moſt of all I wiſh the Abolition of this Trade on thoſe *eternal principles of juſtice*, as well as *humanity*, to which nations, as well as individuals, are bound in all their conduct to conform themſelves.

Mr. VAUGHAN, in explanation. The Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt ſuppoſes that I am a friend to Slavery. I ſaid

I ſaid I had ſome property in the Weſt Indies, and, being an elder ſon, might have looked to the poſſeſſion of Negroes; but I declare I never had, nor ever will be poſſeſſed of a ſlave. As to the Slave Trade, I thought what I had ſaid might have explained my feelings. I would ſacrifice any thing to a prudent termination of both evils, for all perſons muſt wiſh that neither had commenced. I was anxious to protect abſent characters, and confined myſelf to parts which might, in the reſult, remove prejudices from the Coloniſts.

Mr. THORNTON, in reply to Mr. Vaughan. I have not meant, by any thing I have ſaid, to reflect *perſonally* on the Honourable Gentleman as a friend to ſlavery. On the contrary, I have wiſhed rather to ſay every thing that is reſpectful of both the Honourable Gentlemen. It is rather the Slave *Trade*, than ſlavery, I have ſpoken againſt.

Colonel TARLETON. Sir, notwithſtanding all the violence with which this motion was ſupported laſt year; notwithſtanding the indefatigable exertions of the Junto, ſince that period, which are fully evinced by the pile of Petitions that have been placed upon the table; I ſhall not ſhrink from the queſtion, but proceed to argue againſt a ſpeculation which, if carried into effect, would, I conceive, prove highly prejudicial to the immediate and future intereſts of this country; being ſtrongly and firmly convinced that humanity, to become laudable and eſtimable, muſt be tempered with juſtice.

I do not conſider it neceſſary, after the thorough inveſtigation which this queſtion has undergone, and the adjudication it received from a reſpectable majority of this Houſe laſt year, again to enter into all the minutiæ, which are neceſſarily implicated in ſo important a debate, and which have been already ſo amply diſcuſſed; but I ſhall touch upon the different prominent features, and ſhall never, I truſt, loſe ſight of that philanthropy which the Abolitioniſts fallaciouſly eſteem to be their

their vantage-ground on this occaſion. As I am one of thoſe that do not think this ſpeculation can, after the hearing and re-hearing it has already obtained, be prolonged to any inordinate length, eſpecially when I recollect, that affairs of the greateſt importance to this Houſe and this Country have lately been voted by large majorities without inquiry, and almoſt without diſcuſſion on the part of Adminiſtration; yet as one of the Repreſentatives of a great and flouriſhing commercial town, as a friend to the rights and property of many thouſands of Manufacturers, Merchants, and Planters, and an advocate likewiſe for Humanity, good Policy, and Juſtice, I will proceed briefly, and, I truſt, clearly, to ſtate thoſe arguments which occur to me againſt the Abolition of the African Trade.

I ſhall not now notice the Origin of the Trade; the ſanction it has received from Parliament; the ſtate of ignorance in which the natives of Africa are involved; the horrid deſpotiſm which pervades it, in conſequence of that barbariſm; or compare the mild government of the Weſt Indies, with the ſavage tyranny of the Kings and Princes of Africa; but endeavour to point out the impolicy and impoſſibility of aboliſhing the African Trade. The different States of Europe are, and have been for ages paſt, ſolicitous to increaſe their Commerce, their Colonies, and their Slave Trade; and by experience have found, that the proſperity of all depended upon the ſucceſs of each. I need not enumerate the Portugueze, the Danes, the Dutch, the Spaniards, and the French, who were reported in this Houſe to have been on the ſtart to outrace us in the ſuppreſſion of the Slave Trade, but who, by authorities which I have now in my hand, are actually foremoſt in the courſe for its continuance and extenſion. It is apparent, therefore, as I had the honour, on a former occaſion to remark to this Houſe, that if we were diſpoſed to ſacrifice our African Trade, other nations would not enter into ſo ruinous a plan. The French, for inſtance, depend greatly on their Weſt India Trade as a ſource both of revenue and navigation. I have it not now in contemplation to expatiate on the ſituation of St. Domingo; to that I ſhall preſently advert;) will they ſuffer a trade, upon which their whole commerce turns, to languiſh? No; they would thank us for our miſtaken ideas of humanity, and they would profit by them; the diſadvantage

tage would be our's; the advantage would be their's; and the condition of the African would be exactly the ſame, whether he croſſed the Atlantic in an Engliſh, or any other European bottom; and ſhould we perſiſt in ſo wild a project as Abolition, the Continent will ſoon be ſupplied with Engliſh houſes, Engliſh ſhips, and Engliſh capitals.

Having ſtated the preſent ſituation of Europe, with regard to the African Trade, it does not, I think, require much penetration or judgment to detect and expoſe the fallacious doctrine of thoſe Sectaries, who would attempt to aboliſh what other nations encourage and protect. A portion of common ſenſe, which in general contributes more to the public good than ſophiſtry or enthuſiaſm, and which frequently diſperſes the miſts which Eloquence, Prejudice, and Fanaticiſm, endeavour to raiſe, to cover their own purpoſes, enables the majority of this Houſe, and of this Country, to declare, that an Abolition on the part of England alone, will not aboliſh the trade in general.

Unleſs a place of Congreſs ſhall be appointed, and unleſs all the nations of Europe accede to ſuch a propoſition, and when their deputies ſhall be aſſembled, enter fully into the project of Abolition; we only create difficulties and embarraſſments for our own Merchants and Manufacturers, without effecting any other purpoſe. Nay, perhaps our preſent wild, fanatical manner of conducting this ſpeculation, may alienate the affections of our Coloniſts, who, through a deluge of blood, may work out for themſelves another independence, or may throw themſelves into the arms of thoſe confederated ſtates, whoſe conſtitution tells us, that they have a ſacred regard for public faith, and private property.

Though I ſincerely wiſh, for the honour of human nature, that an eternal veil could be drawn over the recent horrible tranſactions in St. Domingo, I cannot help noticing ſome circumſtances, becauſe they ſeem to originate in the ſame principles and practices, which ſome people in this Country have lately adopted, with regard to the Weſt-India Iſlands. I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe the barbarities and horrors of thoſe ſcenes, which have been diſplayed at St. Domingo—a bare recital of which, would make an impreſſion upon the hardeſt heart, and moſt inacceſſible underſtanding, without the aſſiſtance of pathetic eloquence, or laboured ingenuity. I ſhall therefore turn the attention of the Committee from a contemplation

plation of rapes, of maſſacres, of conflagrations, of impaled infants, and acts of parricide, and endeavour to point out conciſely, the impolicy, as well as danger, of our now purſuing the object of Abolition.

Partial extracts of the debates of this Houſe, and the garbled ſtatements of evidence, which have been ſo induſtriouſly circulated, both in this Country, and through all the Colonies, have created alarm and diſtruſt throughout every Iſland in the Weſt-Indies: all the letters from that quarter of the Globe, ſpeak moſt forcibly of the miſchiefs and dangers that may ariſe, and which actually threaten the White-Inhabitants. I have within this laſt week received a letter from a reſpectable officer at Antigua, deſcribing the ſickly ſituation of the King's troops, owing to the frequent detachments required from them, in order to awe or ſuppreſs inſurrections amongſt the Negroes, throughout the different Iſlands. Government has been made acquainted with theſe circumſtances, and the perils which conſequently impended, and to relieve the minds of the Coloniſts: and to counteract the abſurd vote of the Miniſter, that very Miniſter has been compelled to ſend a reinforcement of Infantry, and a Regiment of Light Dragoons; the vote of this night may require additional troops, and if this chimerical project is to be revived every year, the Army of England may be fully employed in the Weſt Indies.

On the ſubject of the Petitions, which have been lately preſented, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that though I entertain the higheſt reſpect and veneration for the Petitions of the people of England, I cannot yield my admiration on the preſent occaſion, becauſe I think that their ſentiments have not been fairly collected. The form and language of the Petitions bear too ſtrong a reſemblance to each other, they appear to be the manufacture of the Sectaries of the Old Jewry; and the ſignatures do not ſtamp them, in my mind, with any additional credit or authority. Unexpected and unſolicited letters have lately poured in upon me, from the moſt reſpectable individuals, in all parts of England, deſcribing the various artful modes adopted for obtaining and creating Signatures, and to an honourable Member now in my eye, I am indebted for an extenſive correſpondence, even in the remoteſt parts of Scotland.

In

In ſome villages and towns, mendicant phyſicians, and itinerant clergymen, have exerciſed almoſt unexampled zeal and induſtry, and diſplayed the ingenuity of Scapin to extort names, from the ſick, the indigent, and the traveller: in others, the grammar-ſchools have received ceremonious viſits, from the indefatigable emiſſaries of the Abolitioniſts; and the boys have been indulged with the gladſome tidings of a holiday, provided they would ſign their own, and the names in the neighbourhood; and, when on examination, the Inhabitants could not furniſh Signatures, ſufficiently numerous, they have been deſired to employ their imagination, to give to "airy "nothings, a local habitation and a name!"

Colonel Tarleton then adverted to the Letters in his poſſeſſion, to ſupport what he had juſt advanced, and amongſt them read the following extracts:

WARRINGTON, March, 1792.

"SIR,

"*Having with pleaſure frequently obſerved, that you are the Champion for the Trade of Liverpool, I beg leave to communicate to you a piece of intelligence I lately pick'd up, on my return from a journey to Mancheſter, relative to the mode purſued by the Partizans for the Abolition, in order to procure as many names as they can to their Petitions. I fell in company with a very reſpectable Tradeſman of Warrington, who told me he had a ſon juſt returned from ſchool at Bolton; where a Petition to Parliament for the Abolition had been induſtriouſly handed about, to obtain the ſignatures of all ranks of people, from the higheſt to the loweſt; and that in order to procure all the names they poſſibly could, real or imaginary, they waited on the ſchool-boys, and not only got them to ſign their own names, but alſo as many more names of their neighbours as they could recollect. Some of the arch boys (of leſs retentive memories) perceiving that thoſe boys who could recollect moſt names met with the greateſt applauſe, in order to receive a proportional ſhare of praiſe, firſt ſigned their own names with others they did recollect; after that they invented new names, and put them down alſo.—Any comments I could make on ſuch Petitions being conſidered as the ſenſe of the people of Bolton, &c. to you would be ſuperfluous——I only give you the*

the fact, which I conſider as my duty, as a well-wiſher to the Merchants and Trade of Liverpool, to inform you of: therefore hope you will pardon the liberty I now take.

I am,
With the greateſt reſpect,
Sir,
Your moſt obedient,
humble Servant,
——— — ———."

Colonel Tarleton has the original Letters in his poſſeſſion, but does not feel authorized to publiſh the names of the Writers.

"HONOURED SIR, CHESTER, March 30, 1792.

"*Knowing there was a Petition carried on here for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, ſigned by a number of names, a great number of which I thought was very improper ſhould be ſent to that Honourable Houſe of which you are a Member, as it was chiefly children belonging to the different ſchools in this city; and amongſt the reſt, it was brought to the ſchool of which I am a ſcholar, and was ſigned (by deſire of my maſter) by every boy in the ſchool that could write his name, myſelf excepted.*

Your's reſpectfully,
——— ——— —."

Relative to the ſignatures of the boys, the Colonel referred to the following paſſage in a letter from Sheffield. "*You* "*have time to eſtabliſh the truth of it by inquiry, before the* "*matter is diſcuſſed, or by a line addreſſed to*

"The Rev. CHARLES CHADWICK, *maſter of the* "*grammar ſchool.*

"Rev. MATTHEW PRESTON, *Engliſh grammar ſchool.*

"JOHN EADON, *maſter of the free writing ſchool.*

"*Or moſt of the other writing ſchool maſters in this place,*"

The Colonel obſerved, that he would not tire the patience of his hearers by reading letters in his poſſeſſion written by reſpectable individuals reſident at the following places:

Portſmouth	Culroſs
Ipſwich	Mancheſter
St. Andrew's	Edinburgh
Carliſle	Hull
Dorcheſter	Cheſter, &c. &c. &c.
Swanſea	

The

The Magiſtrates of the places whence theſe extraordinary Petitions have originated, have ſeldom been approached. The Town Halls have ſtill more rarely had theſe Petitions diſplayed in them, in order to await the deliberation, the deciſion, or the ſignatures of the grave, reſpectable, and informed part of the community. No, Sir, parts of the flimſy, hearſay evidence, which for a length of time oppreſſed and diſgraced the table of this Houſe, were mutilated, diſtorted, and reduced to the ſize of pamphlets, in order to promote their circulation throughout all the ale-houſes and exciſe-offices in this kingdom; where the unwary and uninformed were tricked out of their humanity, by inflammatory extracts; and from ſuch ſources moſt of the petitions, which, I had almoſt ſaid diſgraced, the ſigners and the receivers, have been produced!

Great God, Sir, is this a decent, honourable, or decorous manner of learning, or ſhowing to the world the ſentiments of the people of this country? No, Sir, it is equally an inſult and mockery upon the people and Parliament of England.

I cannot help ſaying a few words at this moment on the difference of the evidence brought before the Privy Council, and the Select Committee of the Houſe, by both parties, previous to the diſcuſſion of laſt year.

I need not ſtigmatize the Abolitioniſts, by mentioning the names of the generality of their evidences: nor need I ſay any thing more in eulogy of the principal evidences brought forward by the Merchants and Planters, than merely repeat the names of Lord Shuldham, Admiral Barrington, Admiral Arbuthnot, Admiral Edwards, Anmiral Hotham, Commodore Gardner, Lord Macartney, Lord Rodney, Sir Ralph Payne, Sir J. Dalling, Sir Archibald Campbell, Mr. Baillie, Mr. Hibbert, and a long liſt of reſpectable characters. If I was to analyſe the bulk of the evidence, I ſhould exhauſt the patience of the Committee, in contraſting the ignorance, the malice, and fanaticiſm of ſome, with the veracity the ingenuouſneſs, and the candour of others. In ſhort, I ſhould exhibit, if I gave a true picture, a variegated view of the fair and foul principles which dignify and debaſe the human mind.

I have

I have no ſmall degree of ſatisfaction reſulting from the opportunity the Honourable Gentleman, who opened this day's debate, has afforded me, of juſtifying a reſpectable body of my conſtituents. He has been pleaſed to enlarge upon the loſſes ſuſtained on the paſſage from Africa to the Weſt Indies. Notwithſtanding his calculations, his fabrications, or his comments, I can pledge myſelf to this Houſe, and this country, in aſſerting and maintaining, the average loſs *per cent.* does not exceed four and a half, ſince the regulations were impoſed on the Slave ſhips. If we advert to the voyages of the King's troops, or the tranſportation to Botany Bay, the compariſon is highly favourable to the African Trade.

Another aſſertion of the Honourable Gentleman's I beg leave likewiſe to repel. He ſtill chooſes to enlarge on the mortality amongſt the ſeamen, and from thence draws an inference prejudicial to the Town of Liverpool, and city of Briſtol.—For the former of thoſe ports (and we may conclude that the ſame trade is conducted in the ſame manner as at the latter) I muſt again repeat what I had the honour to deliver to the Houſe laſt year, as there is no event which gives me reaſon to doubt its veracity:—"The Liverpool African Trade is, "in proportion to the number of hands it employs, the moſt "productive nurſery for ſeamen that belongs to the commerce "of this country. For, admitting for a moment the exag-"gerated calculations which have gone abroad, of the mo-"tality of the Seamen employed in this Trade; admitting "that 642, out of 3170 perſons, die in the voyage of one "year; admitting farther, that half this mortality falls upon "that half of the crew which is compoſed of Seamen and Of-"ficers, and conſequently that 321 Seamen periſhed in the "courſe of one year's voyage, yet as 1585 Landſmen from "the ſingle port of Liverpool alone, in ſpite of that fabrica-"ted mortality, contributes annually, by means of this "Trade, an augmentation of 943 perſons to the Navy "of Great Britain."

I ſhall not treſpaſs longer on the patience of the Committee, farther than making one more obſervation on the Honourable Gentleman's Speech, in which ſo little novelty occurred. He was pleaſed to ſay that white people, and the ſailors in particular, could work in the Weſt Indies.—In anſwer to that aſſertion, I ſhall refer to what I deem good authority

thority—the teſtimony of many reſpectable Officers. It would be tireſome to enumerate the names of all the Officers who have ſerved in that part of the world; for they generally, I believe, without a ſingle exception, maintain the truth of what I advance.—If he does not like Naval or Military Authorities, I will indulge the Honourable Gentleman with other proofs of my aſſertion. It has been found by experience that the natives of Europe could not endure any labour under the intemperate heat of the Weſt Indies.—Frequent attempts have been made to cultivate eſtates with white labourers. In this experiment the French are ſaid to have loſt 12,000 whites in the year 1763. The Aſſembly of Jamaica offered great encouragement in the year 1749, to induce white families to ſettle in that Iſland, but of the few that went, in ten years there were no remains.

With reſpect to the value of the African and Weſt India Trade to this country, examined either ſeparately or collectively, no perſon has yet preſumed to doubt the benefits derived from them. The Manufacturers and Merchants of this country find their intereſt materially allied to the exiſtence of the former; and though, on a prior occaſion, the Honourable Gentleman who moved the queſtion was pleaſed to ſtyle the African Trade "a Lottery, at Liverpool," it has been found by experience to be generally a profitable concern, and that the morals and fortunes of the individuals, who enter into it, are not ſo much debaſed and ruined, as thoſe of their neighbours, by their connection, with the ſtate lottery of this country.

By an Abolition, ſeveral hundred ſhips, ſeveral thouſand ſailors, and ſome millions of induſtrious mechanics, will loſe their employment, and be rendered worſe than uſeleſs; for a ſudden chaſm of this ſort will undoubtedly prove of the moſt dangerous conſequences to ſociety.

A yearly *deficit* of ſix millions, which is the loweſt average, and admitted by all ſides of the Houſe, and which will fall on the manufacturers, ſhip-builders, and a large body of the working people, will be ſenſibly felt in this country, though her induſtry and commerce flouriſh almoſt beyond calculation. And if I add to this defalcation of our commerce and revenue, the loſs of our Colonies, which are eſtimated at ſeventy millions, which, from the beſt authorities, are totally

dependent on the African Trade, what new diſcovery or contrivance is to remedy an evil which would palſy the very exiſtence of the national proſperity ?

The oppoſition to the queſtion now before the Houſe, is ſo connected with the well-being and good government of this country, that if I was an enemy to the Conſtitution of England, which has been the work of ages, and which, though a good, all muſt acknowledge to be a very complicated machine, I would vote for the Abolition of the African Trade. It certainly will be allowed, that a government, conſtituted like the one we now enjoy, is a new work in the annals of mankind. The great extent of commerce and credit, and the ſtupendous national debt, which overſhades the revenue of Great Britain, are circumſtances to which we can find no parallel in hiſtory. Through the medium of ſcience, and the extenſion of labour and manufactures, we are enabled to penetrate into every country, to become the merchants of every ſtate, and the citizens of every clime.

To our commercial ſucceſs, therefore, we may fairly attribute our great increaſe of power, wealth, and conſequence ; and our public and national debt has unfortunately, whether from error in Government, or not, I will not pretend to decide, kept pace with that power, that wealth, and that conſequence. If, therefore, we attempt to circumſcribe the means which have enabled us to arrive at the ſummit of commercial proſperity, ſhall we not endanger our Conſtitution by raſhly drying up the ſources which ſwelled the tide, and gave rapidity to the current of our commercial importance and national revenue.

I need not enter into a minute deſcription of the origin of the African Trade, or the origin of the National Debt. If either were to commence *de novo*, there would not be found in this Houſe, or in this country, a more ſtrenuous oppoſer of ſuch ſpeculations ; but circumſtanced as we now are, it is the intereſt and duty of every good citizen, not to oppreſs the main-ſpring of Government, but to facilitate and regulate its movements with care and circumſpection.

If, Sir, we violate the ſanction of Parliament, and touch the vitals of our Commerce, with a rough and injudicious hand, we endanger the exiſtence of our preſent Conſtitution. By the moderation and prudent interference of this Houſe, the

African

African Trade, if mal-practices exiſt in it, may be meliorated; by timely information we may correct the abuſes in Government, increaſe the general proſperity of this country, and reſtore and invigorate the powers of the Legiſlature. But, if with an imprudent temerity, we daringly ſtrike at the root of our commerce, we undermine our preſent advantages, and deſtroy our future expectations; and the Repreſentatives of the people will be guilty of ſuicide upon the laws, the proſperity, and the conſtitution of England.

Mr. M. MONTAGU.—I wiſh to bring to the recollection of the Houſe, that on a former occaſion, when my Honourable Friend (Mr. Wilberforce) introduced a Motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, I abſtained from troubling the Houſe with any argument. For, however anxious I may be to teſtify my opinion, and to prove that I have formed a judgment not more firm, than candid and deliberate, upon the ſubject; yet knowing, that from the ardor with which I have entered on the purſuit, and from the many hours I have been induced to ſpend upon it, I may be ſuſpected of an intemperate zeal, and of ſomewhat of the feelings of a party, I have been willing to yield my ſtation in the conteſt to thoſe who may be ſuppoſed to come with cooler imaginations; and have tied myſelf down, in the ſituation of a ſpectator, to an attentive conſideration of the arguments adduced on each ſide of the queſtion. It is in this poſition, that, diveſting myſelf as far as I can of all I have thought before upon the ſubject, and giving a candid entertainment to the objections of the adverſary, I have been more than ever confirmed in the ſoundneſs of my principles, and in the opinion of the policy, as well as juſtice of the Abolition. It is now then no longer in my power, conſiſtent with the duties I owe to my country, to juſtice, and humanity, to reſrain from uttering what I conceived to be my unalterable ſentiments upon the ſubject, and I entreat the Houſe to believe, that it is in diſcharge of this duty I addreſs them, and not from any impertinent deſire of obtruding myſelf on their notice.

But before I enter on the argument, I wiſh to obviate a prejudice entertained againſt the friends of an Abolition of the Slave Trade, who are accuſed of proceeding in a raſh and precipitate manner to their concluſion, upon abſtract and impracticable grounds; and of inſiſting on an abſurd extreme by Abolition, while they reject a wiſe, temperate, and practicable medium by Regulation. To do away this prejudice, I am deſirous of offering ſome preliminaries to the adverſary, which may ſerve as a juſt point of reference between us. All I require on their parts is to concede, that in the Slave Trade there exiſts a great evil, which muſt of neceſſity be remedied, and that the means of remedy ought to be ſuch, as will be effectual to the object, and not an idle mockery and deluſion. In return for this conceſſion, I am ready to admit, that, inaſmuch as it is the duty of legiſlators to remedy exiſting evils, and thoſe evils particularly of the moſt extenſive and pernicious influence, it is no leſs their duty to apply that remedy in the leaſt hazardous manner the nature of the evil will admit, and to feel themſelves reſponſible, that the hand of the phyſician ſhould be the hand of a friend, and not the raſh interference of an empiric. I hope the Houſe will feel, that while I offer theſe principles as a ſtandard by which to meaſure all I have to ſay on the ſubject, I am deſirous to eſtabliſh a fair and impartial criterion between the two parties.

With the impreſſion of the latter ſtrong upon my mind, I ſhall proceed to argue the queſtion, and to lay before the Houſe, the reaſons which convince my mind, that no regulation, ſhort of an Abolition of the trade, will be effectual; and that a regulation by any of thoſe means which alone can be thought likely to have any effect, will prove infinitely more dangerous to the ſecurity of the planters, both in their perſons and property, than the Abolition. I ſhall not make any effort to prove, that the application of any regulations to the original grievance on the coaſt of Africa is impoſſible, becauſe the truth there appears ſo obvious, that I may almoſt take it as a conceſſion of the opponent. For how is it poſſible to aſcertain the juſtice of the captivity of each individual, whom we force away into bondage? Can we eſtabliſh tribunals all along the coaſt, and in every ſhip, to inquire into the offences committed by each ſlave, and into the legality of the puniſhment?

puniſhment? What judges can we find for ſuch an office? But admitting, for the argument's ſake, that we could invent ſuch a tribunal, as might aſcertain the right of the ſeller to the perſons of thoſe who are enſlaved on the coaſt, what expedient could we imagine io bring evidence of the juſtice of the captivity, or by far the greater number, who were brought from great diſtances inland? The impoſſibility of ſuch regulations is ſo clear, that I ſhall not waſte time in proving it. But before I paſs to another part of the ſubject, I wiſh the Houſe to pauſe, and recollect, that if it were indeed impoſſible to do away the evil of this part of the trade, how ſtrong, how evident, how invincible ought to be the neceſſity pleaded for the continuance of what is irremediably unjuſt in its foundation!

I ſhall not dwell much upon the proof of the inefficacy of regulations as to the Middle Paſſage. My Honourable Friend has ſhown, that however the mortality might be abated in moſt of the ſhips, by the regulations of Sir William Dolben's Bill, yet, wherever a contagious diſtemper happens to break out (and ſuch in many inſtances muſt always be expected) the greateſt part of the cargo is ſwept away, and the average of deaths is by theſe inſtances ſtill kept up to a ſhocking and enormous height.

What I would wiſh principally to inculcate, is the impoſſibility of applying regulations in the Weſt Indies, without more danger to the perſons and property of the planters, than would accrue by the Abolition. This part of the argument I am particularly deſirous to enforce, becauſe I know that upon this, and upon the ſtate of the population in the iſlands, the whole meaſure muſt reſt with thoſe to whom we muſt look for a majority, with the perſons who admit the injuſtice of the trade, but who believe, or at leaſt fear, the danger and impolicy of an Abolition. My firſt poſition here will be, that no regulations can be rendered effectual to the protection of the ſlave in the Weſt Indies, which do not admit the evidence of the Negro in a Court of Juſtice. My ſecond, that to admit the evidence of a Negro in a Court of Juſtice will be infinitely more dangerous to the perſons and the property of the Planters than the Abolition of the trade. In the firſt place, I would wiſh Gentlemen to conſider what is to be done by regulation for the protection of the ſlave? Should it be en-

acted that the puniſhments be moderate? That the number of laſhes be limited? The Colonial Legiſlature have already done as much as the magic of *words alone* can do upon the ſubject. Yet the evidence upon the Table uniformly tends to prove, that in ſpite of this law, the only protection of the ſlave is in the clemency of the maſter; becauſe the whites, being one or two in number on a plantation, the offence, however atrocious and inhuman, exiſts not within the eye or reach of the law, though committed in the preſence of a hundred ſlaves. Beſides, that by ſplitting the offence, and inflicting the puniſhment at intervals, the law is evaded, although the fact be within the reach of evidence, by the accidental preſence of a white man.

I beg leave to advert to the evidence of Captain Cook, of the 89th regiment, and of Chief Juſtice Otley, as to this point; the former relating a ſhocking inſtance of reiterated puniſhment, in contempt of the law, within his own knowledge; the latter declaring, that "he can deviſe no method of bringing a maſter, ſo offending, to juſtice, while the evidence of the ſlave continues inadmiſſible." But let councils of protection, and guardians of the ſlaves be appointed to watch over their welfare, and to reſtrain the maſter. This again is a well-ſounding expedient; but nugatory and abſurd in practice. For what perſons, reſident in the iſlands, would be found, to whom that important and troubleſome office could be entruſted, with a hope of a faithful diſcharge of its duties? Who is there, not only in the iſlands, but reſident on every particular plantation, who will riſque the comfort of his life by the exerciſe of ſo invidious an interference? But granting that men of ſuch exalted and active beneficence could be found in the iſlands, as to ſacrifice all their time, and all the friendſhip of their equals and aſſociates, for the good of the ſlaves, what could they effect? Suppoſe the Honourable Gentleman who brought forward the motion were deputed, an unwelcome, indeed, but in all probability a very vigilant guardian of the ſlaves, what protection would the law enable him to afford to the ſlave? Could he be preſent at all times, and at all places, at once? That would be a taſk too arduous even for his active philanthropy. Yet if that were not the caſe, the offence to be redreſſed by him would require to be proved to him; and the ſame difficulties of proof would ſtand in the way of the guardian, as of any other tribunal.

in

I might urge many other arguments to prove that all regulations muſt be ineffectual, ſhort of the admiſſion of the ſlave to give evidence. But to admit the ſlaves to give evidence in their preſent ſtate of civilization, would be of the moſt dangerous conſequence to the ſafety and the property of the Planters; and to admit the ſlaves to any of the rights of citizens, where they ſo greatly out-number the whites, will be to make them in effect the maſters. One Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Vaughan) has ſaid, the ſlaves may be admitted to give evidence, leaving it to the judges to give weight, according to their diſcretion, to the depoſitions. I confeſs this appears to me to be fraught with a moſt hazardous principle of diſcontent; for how are the Negroes to be perſuaded, that it is fit they ſhall be admitted to ſpeak the truth, and then be diſbelieved and diſregarded? What a fermentation muſt ſuch a conduct naturally excite in men diſmiſſed with injuries unredreſſed, though abundantly proved, in their apprehenſion, by their teſtimony? If then it be proved, that no regulations are likely to be effectual, and it has been admitted, that the evil calls in an imperious and irreſiſtible manner for a remedy, there is no expedient left but an Abolition. That an Abolition of the Trade would not only be effectual, but ſafe, and even beneficial to the Planters, has been irrefragably proved by the calculations of the ſtate of population by a Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) to which no anſwer has been even attempted to be given. And until ſuch an attempt is made with ſucceſs, I wiſh ſuch Gentlemen (who I fear are many) as come down to vote with a ſlight view of the ſubject, upon the aſſurances of ſome of their friends (perhaps intereſted) who ſay that it is a dangerous expedient to aboliſh the trade, would conſider ſeriouſly how they can reconcile their conſciences to juſtify and continue the moſt horrible cruelty and injuſtice, upon a political neceſſity, not maintained except by aſſertion, but refuted in the calculations, and abandoned in argument, even by thoſe whoſe authority they meant to follow in their deciſion.

I could wiſh two deſcriptions of perſons to give their attention to what I admit to be only an argument to their diſcretion, but to what appears to me to be a very forcible conſideration, and one which in wiſdom ought to have great weight

influence on their conduct. I wiſh the Planters to conſider the great increaſing progreſs, which the opinion of the injuſtice of the Trade is making in the Nation at large, as manifeſted by the Petitions, which had almoſt obſtructed the proceedings of the Houſe by their perpetual introduction. They muſt begin to perceive, that it is no longer poſſible to ſtifle the buſineſs in the birth, that offended Juſtice will at length, with an uplifted arm, break down all oppoſition, and that the minds of the repreſentatives would be found in union with the opinions of their conſtituents. It is now, therefore, for them to ſave their credit, and to take care that the retribution to the injured Africans ſhall not be made without their concurrence. The other deſcription of perſons, whoſe attention I requeſt (and whom I have reaſon to believe to be a large body) are ſuch as have been led to aſcribe the agitation of this queſtion to the ſame ſpirit of abſtract and impracticable equalization, which they dread to ſee applied to the deſtruction of order and good government in our invaluable Conſtitution. If there be any perſons with this apprehenſion, they will do well to conſider whether they had not better be in haſte to deſtroy that aſſociation, and by ſeparating the real evil from the imaginary grievance, to deſtroy the credit which the latter may derive from being connected in opinion with the former. If they neglect to remedy a moſt abominable and crying abuſe, againſt which every feeling of reaſon, religion, and even political wiſdom, revolts with abhorrence, do they not play into the hands of thoſe, who conſtrue their dread of innovation on other occaſions, into an obſtinate reſiſtance of truth, juſtice, and expediency?

I ſhall now conclude with repeating a profeſſion I formerly made, that I will never ceaſe to promote the Abolition of the Slave Trade, with every faculty of body and mind, till the injuries of humanity are redreſſed, and the national character relieved from the deepeſt diſgrace that is recorded in the annals of mankind.

Mr.

Mr. WHITBREAD. The ſubject has undergone ſo full and fair a diſcuſſion, and the arguments that have been urged to prove that the motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade is founded in principles of impolicy and injuſtice, have ſo compleatly failed of their effect, that I do not deem it neceſſary to occupy much of the time of the Committee, and therefore ſhall not long detain them. Could I conceive that the trade is, as ſome have aſſerted it to be, founded on principles of humanity; could I conceive that the miſerable Africans are reſcued from death and torture in their own country, and that upon being carried to the Weſt Indies, a happier clime and more luxuriant ſoil, they are put under the dominion of kind and humane maſters; that their toil is light, and their labour eaſy; that their days are ſpent in healthy and pleaſing occupation, and not conſumed in dreary and oppreſſive labour, and that at evening they return to their homes, chearfully to the ſong and the dance, and retire to reſt, unfatigued, and with hearts at eaſe; that in the morning they riſe, invigorated by reſt, and alert with chearfulneſs, to purſue an occupation that is mild and eaſy; were I convinced, that in ſickneſs they are attended with care and ſkill, and that their old age is rendered comfortable by the enjoyment of peace and plenty, and that they lay them down to ſleep the ſleep of death, in calmneſs and reſignation; were I convinced, that theſe were circumſtances that exiſted in truth, and are ſubſtantiated by fact, even then, I would vote that the Slave Trade be aboliſhed; inaſmuch, as I am convinced, that that which is in principle fundamentally wrong, no practice whatever can render right and pardonable. No argument can prove, nor any eloquence perſuade me, that man is torn from his native country, and his deareſt connections, for the purpoſe of nouriſhment, and that he is delivered into the hands of man, in order to warrant his ſafety, and procure his protection. Who will aſſert, that man, when delivered into the hands of man, will not be ill treated? Who will ſay that he ſhall not ſuffer? It is the known effect of power upon the human heart, and it muſt neceſſarily happen, that not only thoſe who were originally good, by being poſſeſſed of arbitrary power become bad, but that many exerciſe a greater degree of cruelty than they would otherwiſe have imagined, from the mere circumſtance of their being enabled to do ſo with impunity. When

man

man is ſubject to the dominion of his fellow creature, there muſt, on the one hand, be tyranny, and on the other, a deep ſenſe of injury: it is the quality of deſpotiſm to corrupt the heart, and deaden the finer feelings of nature. Of the hardened and cruel among mankind, there are already too great a number, and to permit perſons of that deſcription, to poſſeſs power over their fellow creatures, is to ſuffer an evil that is dangerous and unjuſtifiable indeed. I beg leave to obſerve, that expreſſions have fallen from ſome of thoſe who have contended for the humanity of the Slave Trade, that convince me, that barbarities exiſt in that traffick that are diſgraceful to human nature. I have heard it aſſerted in this Houſe, I do not impute it invidiouſly to any one, but it was an expreſſion that forcibly ſtruck my mind; I mean an expreſſion of an Honourable Gentleman in his place in the laſt ſeſſion of Parliament, on the diſcuſſion of the Sierra Leone buſineſs, who, when he came to ſpeak of the ſlaves, in an account of the felling off the ſtock of a plantation, ſaid, that the ſlaves fetched leſs than their common price, becauſe they were *damaged!*—Damaged! Does not this imply that the ſlave had ſpent the beſt part of his life in the ſervice of a maſter, who parts with him for a ſmall compenſation, and leaves him to linger out the remainder of his miſerable exiſtence with a maſter, perhaps of more ſevere manners, a harſher nature, and in all probability not leſs arbitrary in his diſpoſition? I cannot but mention a paſſage that I diſcovered in the peruſal of a pamphlet publiſhed in the defence of the Slave Trade, the author of which, deſcribing the happy ſituation of the negroes, among other felicitous circumſtances obſerves, that a good negro wants no character, for his ſervices may be ſeen, as it were, and his value appreciated, by the marks he bore of chains, galls, and laſhes. What is that, but to ſay that ſuch inſtruments of torture are made uſe of, and that laſhes are inflicted that leave indelible marks? And who will ſay, that they were juſtly inflicted? An Honourable Gentleman, who this evening ſpoke for the firſt time in this Houſe (Mr. Vaughan) has ſaid, that he heartily wiſhed for the Abolition of the trade, and yet has argued in favour of its continuance. That Gentleman has declared, that upon going over to the Weſt Indies, he was ſurpriſed to find the ſlaves in ſo good a ſituation; but he has alſo obſerved, that they are all poor and degraded,

degraded, and putting ſlavery and cruelty out of the queſtion, are better off than the poor of this country. What is it, we want to aboliſh? It is cruelty and ſlavery that we wiſh to aboliſh, and thereby to do away that dreadful diſtinction which degrades their condition, and reduces them below the level of their fellow creatures. The Honourable Gentleman has expreſſed his admiration of their reſignation; but is it not that ſort of reſignation which is the conſequence of deſpair? He has alſo ſaid, that one of the overſeers aſked a ſlave, who was idle, "What do you think your maſter bought you for? Did he not buy you to labour?" and that the ſlave thereupon directly began to work. Had the negro uſed any reply, what would have been the argument in anſwer, but thoſe wheals and ſcars which he could not have reſiſted?—With reſpect to the aſſertion that the commerce of the country would be materially affected by an Abolition of the Slave Trade, as the ſubject has been ſo ably diſcuſſed, I will not detain the Committee upon that point. Nothing has paſſed to alter my opinion on the ſubject; but as an Honourable Friend of mine (Colonel Tarleton) who has made a very able defence of the trade, has aſſerted that the petitions which have been preſented from all parts of the kingdom, do not contain the general opinion of the people, or ſpeak their ſentiments, but that they have been obtained by artifice, and were undeſerving of credit; I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that my Honourable Friend has adduced rather unſatisfactory evidence to prove, that the Petitions do not ſpeak the voice of the country. I have had the honour to preſent a petition from my conſtituents, and I will venture to ſay, that there does not exiſt more reſpectable names in the kingdom than thoſe of the perſons who have ſigned that Petition. It has been ſaid by my Honourable Friend, that there is a ſtrong ſimilitude in their tenor and ſubſtance. That is a circumſtance, by no means to be wondered at. There is but one plain tale to tell, and it is not ſurpriſing that it has been told in nearly the ſame manner and expreſſions. There is but one boon to aſk, and that is the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The Petitions contain the ſentiments of the people in general, and neither can they be invalidated, nor the evidence on the table be diſproved, by the epiſtle of a quaker at Warrington, or the letter of a Cheſter ſchool-boy. The Honourable

Gentleman

Gentleman who has brought forward the queſtion, has been accuſed of enthuſiaſm: I am as warm an advocate for the Abolition of the Slave Trade as the Honourable mover of the queſtion; but neither of them have ſtarted an idea of the Slaves being emancipated; they are as yet unfit for ſuch a bleſſing. It is not for the emancipation of the Slaves, but for an Abolition of the Slave Trade, that they have contended. Is that a proof of enthuſiaſm or fanaticiſm, or is it a proof of a calm and rational inveſtigation? That meaſures may be adopted for a gradual emancipation, as a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) laſt year ſuggeſted, is, I am perſuaded, the wiſh of every conſiderate man, and is the object that we have in view.—An Honourable Gentleman has ſaid ſomething about two great orators, and men of diſtinguiſhed abilities, having united their talents on the occaſion, and who have given greater credit to the Honourable Gentleman who made the motion, by acceding to his opinion on the ſubject, than he merits. I do not believe, that the eloquence of the Honourable Gentleman has prevailed upon them to acquieſce in his opinion, but that the naked truth and ſimple juſtice of the ſubject, have induced them to ſupport the queſtion; and if any thing could yield additional weight to that of the conviction I entertain, that the traffick is inhuman and impolitic, it would be the circumſtance of the two gentlemen in queſtion, men of ſuch eminent talents and brilliant abilities, and who are in habits of oppoſition to each other, uniting on the occaſion, and contending for the Abolition of the trade; convinced as I am that that union is the conſequence of the clearneſs of their minds, and the irreſiſtible force of truth.—I truſt, that thoſe are not to be found who exult in the calamities that have recently occurred in St. Domingo. If ſuch men exiſt, in my mind they merit excluſion from ſociety, and ought to be driven from civilized life. For my own part, I diſclaim all exultation on the ſubject. An Honourable Gentleman has declared, that thoſe calamities are the firſt fruits of laſt year's Debate on the Slave Trade. I deny the aſſertion, and contend that they are the effect of the Trade itſelf. There is a point of endurance, beyond which human nature cannot go, at which the mind of man riſes by its native elaſticity with a ſpring and violence proportioned to the degree to which it has been depreſſed. The calamities in

St. Domingo

St. Domingo are the effect of the Slave Trade, and proceeded from no other cauſe; and if the trade continues, ſimilar evils are to be apprehended in our Weſt India Iſlands. The cruelties practiſed by the blacks in St. Domingo they have learned from their oppreſſive maſters:—"Hath not an "African eyes? Hath not an African hands, organs, dimen- "ſions, ſenſes, paſſions? Is he not fed with the ſame food, "hurt with the ſame weapons, ſubject to the ſame diſeaſes, "healed by the ſame means, warmed and cooled by the ſame "ſummer and winter as we are? If you prick him, does he "not bleed? If you tickle him, does he not laugh? If you "poiſon him, does he not die? And if you wrong him, ſhall "he not revenge? If he is like you in the reſt, he will re- "ſemble you in that. If an African wrong a white man, "what is his humility?—Revenge. If a white man wrong "an African, what ſhould his ſufferance be by our example? "Why, revenge. The cruelty you teach him, he will exe- "cute.—But I fear it is not poſſible to better the inſtruction."

Mr. VAUGHAN in reply to Mr. Whitbread. Perhaps I may not have expreſſed myſelf clearly, but I did not profeſs to ſpeak as a Planter or Merchant, but as a Member of Parliament, and to give an independent opinion; even though, in ſome points, it may ſeem to make againſt the Coloniſts, who might not thank me now, but would hereafter.

Mr. MILBANK. With regard to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the policy of the meaſure is as great as its juſtice is undeniable. Where ſlavery prevails, every operation that is performed, is done in a rude and unworkmanlike manner, and no ſubſtitute for manual labour, no artificial means of expediting work, alleviating its trouble, and ſhortening the time of finiſhing it, is introduced or thought of. Where ſlavery exiſts, there muſt be oppreſſion, and in my opinion the Planters are bound to thank thoſe who have warned

warned them of the more than probable dangers that muſt one day enſue from the reſentment of their Slaves, againſt thoſe whom they cannot but regard with an inimical eye, and conſider as their tyrants. I ſhall therefore certainly vote for the motion.

The Right Honourable Mr. Secretary DUNDAS. When this queſtion was agitated in the Houſe laſt year, I happened to be prevented by indiſpoſition from giving any vote or public opinion upon it. My honourable friends, however, with whom I may be ſuppoſed to have the moſt intercourſe, have very well known that I have long entertained the ſame opinion with them as to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, though I have differed from them as to the mode of effecting it.

I have felt equally warm with themſelves in the purſuit of the general object, and I feel ſo at the preſent moment; but I muſt conſider how far it may be proper for me to give my aſſent to the particular propoſition which is made by my Honourable Friend.

It is neceſſary I ſhould ſtate the ground on which I make this obſervation.

Such has been the manner in which the queſtion has been hitherto argued by both parties; the one ſide ſeems to me to have gone ſo much into the extreme, as well as the other, that I (not judging exactly as either of them do) muſt conſider how I am to ſhape my conduct.

One ſet of Gentlemen, the Honourable Mover and his ſupporters, have ſpoken without reſerve, not only for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, but for an *immediate* and *abrupt* Abolition; thoſe on the other ſide have unequivocally argued for the continuation of the African Slave Trade, as eſſentially neceſſary to the Weſt Indian Iſlands; they have ſet no limits to the continuation of that trade: but laid it down as a propoſition, that in order to maintain our commerce with the Weſt Indies, the importation of new Slaves from Africa muſt be continued *for ever*. Theſe are the two extremes into which

which the two parties have put themſelves. Now, Sir, I agree with my Honourable Friend, as to the material parts of his argument. I am of opinion with him, that the African trade is not founded in policy; I am of opinion with him, that the continuation of it is not eſſential to the preſervation and continuance of our trade with the W. India Iſlands; I am of opinion that there is no mortality in that quarter that is incurable, and that the human race may not only be maintained, but increaſed in the Weſt India Iſlands. In all theſe great leading queſtions I concur with my Honourable Friend. It may then be aſked, Do you not agree then, to the Abolition of the Trade? I anſwer, that neither do I differ in this opinion. But the point of difference between us is this; I cannot help doubting as to the prudence or practicability of the mode of aboliſhing it, propoſed by my Honourable Friend. If ever there was a heart purer than any other—if ever there was a man that acted upon the pureſt motives that ever can actuate human nature, I believe I may juſtly ſay that my Honourable Friend is that man; but ſtill, with reſpect to the proſecution of his object, and the manner which prudence would ſuggeſt with a view to the practicability of it, he muſt excuſe my ſtating that there is a ſhade of difference between us, When he talks of direct Abolition, I would ſubmit to him whether he does not run counter to the prejudices and habits of life of thoſe men who are moſt deeply intereſted in the queſtion: I ſay prejudices of men *intereſted* in the trade, it is true; but ſurely, Sir, if it is poſſible to effect the ſame object without raiſing any extraordinary apprehenſions on their part with reſpect to their great and important intereſts, it is more prudent to take that mode, and ſo to form the propoſition, as to relieve their minds from the apprehenſion of injury. But farther, is my Honourable Friend perfectly ſure, that in his zeal for one great object, he does not run counter to another equally important, I mean the ſacred attention Parliament has ever ſhewn to the private intereſts and *patrimonial rights* of individuals.

I believe, in caſes where men have embarked themſelves in employments, which have been afterwards conſidered to be abuſes, and which have been even of an *unlicenſed* nature, it has ever been the cuſtom of Parliament, in the correction of theſe abuſes, to treat the perſons with tenderneſs and compaſſion.

Whatever

Whatever idea men may now have of the African Trade; certain it is, that thoſe who have embarked their capitals in the cultivation of the Weſt India Iſlands, and lent their money upon Weſt India property, have done it not only under the ſanction, but the ſolemn invitation of Parliament. Undoubtedly Parliament may think it right to depart from any principle it has adopted again and again, as it appears upon your Statute Books to have often done; it may be wiſdom to do it; but ſure I am, it is your duty to recollect, in carrying your plans into execution, under what circumſtances the property has been embarked, and whether you have invited the men to inveſt their money in thoſe Iſlands.

I mean not to urge an argument which has been reprobated again and again in the courſe of this debate, that if we give up this trade, other nations will not give it up; our duty, I admit, does not depend upon the conduct of others. But there is another view in which I may make an obſervation on this ſubject. In caſe other nations take up the trade, may they not defeat the object of my honourable Friend? May not Britiſh ſubjects in the Weſt Indies be ſupplied by veſſels from St. Euſtatius or ſome other neutral port? What is to prevent an Oſtend or Dutch merchant from carrying Slaves from Africa to the W. India Iſlands? Gentlemen may make light of this argument, if they pleaſe; but I ſhall be glad to hear an anſwer to it. I ſtate it in this view, and on this ground only.

It is my opinion, there is a poſſibility of avoiding theſe objections, and at the ſame time of not running directly contrary to the prejudices I have mentioned as exiſting in the minds of the Weſt India merchants. It is in the ſhape of regulations only that we can totally aboliſh the African Slave Trade; and we ſhall thus do it not leſs ſpeedily, nay, even more ſpeedily, than in the manner which has been propoſed.

I do not mean to ſay, let the trade continue for ever, In my main principle I am united with the Honourable Gentleman; but I repeat it, it is in the ſhape of regulations that I think you will procure the Abolition in the moſt direct manner.

Mr. Fox. To what regulations do you refer?

Mr. DUNDAS.

Mr. DUNDAS. To what regulations do I refer? In the firſt place, to regulations the moſt forcible and efficacious, in order to the increaſe and encouragement of the breed of native Negroes in the Weſt Indies. Secondly, every ſpecies of *general* regulation, with the view of putting an end to hereditary ſlavery, and relieving the condition of the ſlaves. I allude alſo to regulations for the education of children, for informing their minds, and rearing them in the principles of religion and morality; a point that muſt greatly facilitate the total annihilation of the ſlavery of theſe children. Without ſuch regulations as theſe, the Abolition of the African Trade would fail, in my opinion, of procuring the effects expected from it.

To thoſe who contend that the cultivation of the Iſlands cannot be continued without a continuance of the Slave Trade, I beg leave to ſay—Reflect on the *gradual* means I propoſe. Their object is gradually and experimentally to prove the practicability of the Abolition of the African Trade, and to provide the means of cultivation, to increaſe the population, and to prove that all the alarms are ill founded. As to the arguments of my Honourable Friend, and the Gentlemen oppoſite, great as their talents are, they are only founded on theory. Let them prove their theory with all the force of reaſoning, and let their ſpeculations be ever ſo ſplendid, it is ſtill theory and ſpeculation only; whereas, by the other method, you prove your point as you go on, and you reſt the meaſure, not upon theory, but on experience.

In mentioning the abolition of hereditary ſlavery in the iſlands, I do not mean that the ſon of an African ſlave ſhould get his freedom by the death of the parent: but that being born free, he ſhould be educated at the expence of the perſon importing his parents, and when arrived at ſuch a degree of ſtrength as may qualify him to labour, he ſhould work for five or ten years, or whatever period it may be, for the payment of the expence of education and maintenance. It is impoſſible to emancipate the preſent Slaves at once; nor would their immediate emancipation be of any immediate benefit to themſelves; but this obſervation does not apply to any of their deſcendants, if trained and educated in the manner I have ſuggeſted.

I differ—I heſitate much on the propoſition of my Honourable Friend. My opinion has been always againſt the

Slave Trade. I will not, therefore, vote againſt his Motion, however I may think proper to qualify it; but that will be matter for future conſideration. If I give my aſſent to the Motion, it is an aſſent that leads to nothing but a general propoſition, the mode of carrying which into effect may be ſettled hereafter. I do not adopt any one extreme in this queſtion.

Permit me now to aſk the indulgence of the Houſe while I addreſs myſelf to thoſe who have maintained the other extreme, that it is abſolutely neceſſary for the cultivation of the Weſt India Iſlands to maintain an importation of African Slaves as uſual. I entreat and ſolemnly conjure them to give a ſerious conſideration to that point. I apprehend they cannot think I aſſume too much when I ſay, that if both Slavery and the Slave Trade can be aboliſhed with ſafety to their property, it deeply concerns their intereſt that the cultivation of their Iſlands ſhould be by Freemen rather than by Slaves.

This general propoſition, I take it for granted, nobody will controvert. I need not illuſtrate the propoſition; look to the whole of the evidence before you on the ſtate of thoſe very Slaves. That they are ill uſed, I do not mean to lay to the charge of the Weſt India Planters; I dare ſay ſome, who are not poſſeſſed of that general humanity which the reſt of mankind have, may treat the Slaves ill. The Honourable Member who ſpoke to-night informs us, that the Planters are in general diſpoſed to pay much regard to their Slaves, and this from conſcience, as well as from a principle of intereſt. I believe many reſpectable Owners in the Weſt Indies take great care of their Negroes. But will not the ſame principle teach them how unſeeming the cultivation by Slaves is, if it is poſſible to be effected by Freemen? And permit me to ſay, there would, in *my* opinion, be ſome inconſiſtency in the conduct of Parliament, if they ſhould take meaſures for the Abolition of the Trade, without at the ſame time taking this under conſideration alſo. Far be it from me—God forbid that I ſhould limit the philanthropy of my Honourable Friends, or that I ſhould entertain the ſmalleſt wiſh to inſult the degraded ſhores of Africa. It is ſomething anomalous that we, who are ourſelves free, ſhould carry on a Slave Trade with Africa; and it is ſomething anomalous alſo that we, who enjoy the full benefits of freedom, ſhould never think of introducing

troducing cultivation in the Weſt Indies by Freemen, and not by Slaves.

I will here appeal to thoſe Gentlemen who know it officially; I appeal to all the Weſt Indians themſelves, for the truth of what I am going to ſtate; I appeal alſo to the Author of the Hiſtory of Jamaica, I mean Mr. Long, and I aſk whether there is any man who does not agree in the plain account given by that hiſtorian, *that the great danger in the Weſt Indies ariſes in reality from the importation of the African Slaves into the Iſlands?* Mr. Long has mentioned it as a fact; and he wrote long before this queſtion was in agitation, and not with any particular deſire to aboliſh the African trade. He diſtinctly ſtates, after referring his readers to the Hiſtory of all the Weſt India Iſlands, that all the inſurrections aroſe from the imported Africans, and not from the Negroes born in the Iſlands. If this is true, permit me to remind the Weſt Indians, how directly this obſervation bears upon the preſent queſtion. But when we are alſo told by that author, that it is a trade deſtructive to the inhabitants of Africa, and that it gives riſe to robbery, murder, and all kinds of abuſes and depredations on the coaſt of Africa—has this alſo had any anſwer? No—except indeed that it is ſaid, in defence of the trade, that thoſe Slaves who are imported by us are all men condemned for crimes, and in conſequence of the legal ſentence of the law. Then I aſk the ſame Gentlemen again, Are not the imported Africans, as Mr. Long alſo ſtates, all the convicts, all the rogues, thieves, and vagabonds of Africa? and then I beg further to aſk, whether the Weſt Indians chuſe to depend on freſh ſupplies of *them* for the cultivation of their lands, and the ſecurity of their Iſlands, when it is alſo found that every inſurrection has ariſen from thoſe very perſons? It is plain the ſafety of the Weſt India Iſlands is concerned in this queſtion. There will be danger of freſh ſtruggles ſo long as an Abolition of this trade is refuſed. The Weſt India Gentlemen are by theſe importations bringing upon the Iſlands the engines of their own deſtruction.

I now call upon them to give a ſerious conſideration to the queſtion, to conſider whether they will not act more judiciouſly, and for their own intereſt, if they will concur in the opinion of putting an end to this trade, inſtead of ſtanding up for the ſyſtem of perpetual importations.

What right, Sir, have they to ſuppoſe that the coaſt of Africa is for ever to remain in its preſent ſtate of barbarity? If once a Prince of an enlightened character ſhould riſe up in that hemiſphere, his firſt act would be to make the means of carrying off all Slaves from thence impracticable Is it then for the ſake of ſuch a precarious and temporary advantage that the preſent ſyſtem is to be continued?

What reaſon have they to ſuppoſe the light of Heaven will never deſcend upon that continent? From that moment there muſt be an end of the preſent African trade. The firſt ſyſtem of improvement, the firſt idea of happineſs that will ariſe in that continent, will bring with it the downfall of the African Slave Trade, and this in a more effectual, and in a more ſudden and miſchievous way, than if done by any regulations of this country. Let this ſuggeſt to them, that it is their own intereſt to contrive a mode of ſupplying labour without truſting to the importation of Slaves from Africa. They may reſt aſſured the trade will not continue. I do not allude to the Petitions in one way or the other. Perhaps the queſtion does not acquire much additional force from them. Many of theſe may have been produced by anxious ſolicitations, and emiſſaries ſent about; and many of thoſe who ſigned them have not perhaps been very much verſed in the nature of the queſtion. They are deſirous of obtaining the Abolition; but have not reflected whether the trade ſhould be aboliſhed gradually or immediately. It is not upon the Petitions that I am deſirous of founding any obſervations, but I wiſh to make this obſervation, that the idea of the impolicy of the African Slave Trade has long been entertained by the moſt enlightened underſtandings of this country, as well as the idea that it is not founded in juſtice. It is the ſentiment of a great body of people that it is not politic, and ought not to exiſt. It has made a deep impreſſion on the minds of enlightened men in this country, that this trade is obnoxious to a thouſand perils and dangers. If that is the caſe, is it a prudent thing for them to reſt on that trade for the farther improvement and cultivation of their property? I really ſpeak with a view to their own intereſt. I have ſo often ſeen imaginary apprehenſions entertained on ſuch ſubjects, that I am ſatisfied in a few years we ſhall ſee this queſtion at reſt, and

that

that the Weſt India Proprietors themſelves will become of my opinion.

There was a ſpecies of ſlavery prevailing only a few years ago in ſome boroughs in Scotland. Every child that carried a coal from the pit, was the bound ſlave of that borough, and their emancipation was thought by Parliament to be material, and was very much agitated in the Houſe. It was urged, that let every man's genius be what it might, yet that thoſe pits in which (the work from its nature was carried on under ground) were quite an excepted caſe, and that without the admiſſion of Slavery in this particular inſtance, the collieries could not be worked; that the price of coals would be raiſed to a moſt immoderate height, and all the neighbouring manufactories which depended on them would eſſentially ſuffer in their intereſts. After ſeveral years ſtruggle, the Bill, however, was carried through both Houſes of Parliament. I am old enough to remember the diſpute; within a year after, the whole idea of the collieries being in the leaſt hurt by the Abolition of this ſort of Slavery, vaniſhed in ſmoke, and there was an end of the buſineſs.

An Honourable Gentleman has alſo told you, which is another argument to the ſame point, that the regulation of the Middle Paſſage has had a ſalutary effect. Now, Sir, the preſent alarms are not more lively than thoſe which were expreſſed when that Bill took place. The ruin of the Liverpool and Briſtol trade was foretold. Yet now one of the Repreſentatives comes forward and plainly tells you, "Our alarms were ill-founded, our apprehenſions were without ground, we found fault with all your regulations, we aſcribed every miſchief to them, whereas we find by experience they have been attended with every benefit," Am I then aſking too much when I aſk for a candid conſideration of the real grounds of the preſent apprehenſion? Perhaps the Weſt Indians may find that the beſt thing they can do, is to cloſe in with my propoſition; and that they will not act moſt wiſely and prudently for themſelves, in maintaining the continuance of the trade with Africa, as at all times neceſſary for the preſervation, improvement, and cultivation of the Weſt India Iſlands.

I am far from flattering myſelf that any thing I have ſaid can at once totally eradicate prejudices that are deeply rooted, and bring over men to a ſet of altogether new ideas; but

I mean to propoſe a moderate and middle way of proceeding. If therefore there is any great body in this Houſe, any reſpectable number of perſons who are of opinion with me, that this trade muſt be ultimately aboliſhed, but by *moderate* meaſures, which ſhall not invade the property of individuals, nor ſhock too ſuddenly the prejudices of our Weſt India Iſlands; I ſay, if there is any great body of men of this opinion, I wiſh them to connect themſelves together, and I will venture to ſay, that Gentlemen of that *moderate* or middle way of thinking, may now reduce the queſtion to its proper bounds, and maintain the principle of aboliſhing the Slave Trade in conſiſtency with their other principles. I offer theſe few obſervations to their conſideration.

The Right Honourable HENRY ADDINGTON, Speaker. Sir, profeſſing myſelf as I do to be one of thoſe moderate men alluded to by the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt, and being of that *moderate* way of thinking, which he approves; I cannot forbear giving way to the impreſſion made upon me, by his forcible manner of ſtating the argument.

In my mind no queſtion ever came before this Houſe, which deſerved a more complete or ſerious inveſtigation. Deeply conſidering the great importance of its object, I feel, and I have long felt, ſuch a mode of treating it, as he has proceeded upon, to be very deſirable, becauſe I have believed, that it would facilitate the attainment of that great end, which I am ſure every one would wiſh to be attained with as little injury as poſſible to private property. The fear of doing a fundamental injury to that extenſive property has hitherto prevented me from giving an opinion againſt a ſyſtem, the continuance of which, however, I could not prevail on myſelf to permit or countenance.

The Slave Trade I abhor; but in the way the Abolition of it was propoſed by my Honourable Friend, in the laſt year, I could not bring myſelf to adopt it, becauſe I was perſuaded, that the ſpecific meaſure he offered to the Houſe, would prove ineffectual to the accompliſhment of its purpoſe. Nor, Sir, would I have it imagined, that I have taken up my averſion to this infamous ſyſtem, merely from the inſpection

tion of thoſe volumes of evidence on your table. No, Sir, it was upon thoſe general and ſolid principles ſo forcibly ſtated by the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt.

I remember, on its being once imputed to a noble and learned Lord, who has now been for ſome years retired from the Bench, when at an early period of his life he was employed againſt the Rebel Lords, that he had not uſed againſt them language ſufficiently ſtrong in proportion to their crime; he well anſwered, that he pitied the loyalty of that man, who imagined that any epithet could aggravate the *crime of treaſon*. And, Sir, I take leave to ſay, that I know no language which can add to the horrors of the *Slave Trade*. It is equal to every purpoſe of crimination to aſſert, that thereby *man is made ſubject to the deſpotiſm of man; that man is to be bought and ſold*. I have felt, however, upon every occaſion when this ſubject has been diſcuſſed, that I had a vaſt difficulty before me: on the one hand, it is impoſſible not to condemn the trade, and to recognize the claims of juſtice due to a whole continent on that ſide, and to that infinite multitude of perſons whom it renders miſerable; but, on the other hand, there are alſo *oppoſing claims of juſtice* on the part of the Weſt Indians. There is a deſcription of perſons on that ſide, who, in like manner, have a ſtrong claim that juſtice in their caſe ſhould be attended to.

Many Gentlemen have adverted to the effects of aboliſhing the trade in part only, this being the whole conſequence of its dereliction by this country. I own I ſhould be diſpoſed to conſider this point very much as it has been conſidered by my Right Honourable Friend. The queſtion is not ſo much, whether it would be carried on by this or that foreign country, but whether if we ſhould attempt immediately to aboliſh it, the trade might not in fact continue under circumſtances ſtill more offenſive than the preſent. And, Sir, if we ſhould be able to ſtop it altogether, ſo that if no importation whatever ſhould take place, it has always appeared to me, that under the preſent circumſtances of the Weſt India Iſlands, an utter impoſſibility muſt preſent itſelf of maintaining the preſent ſtock: the number now in the iſlands not being ſufficient for that purpoſe.

After the very able manner in which the whole of this extenſive queſtion has been argued to-night, I will not tread

over the ground again ; but it will be neceſſary for me to obſerve on ſome particular parts. It was forcibly argued, by my Honourable Friend who opened the Debate, that notwithſtanding the diſproportion of ſexes which there appears to be, the ſupply of the Negroes in future, if the importations are ſtopped, muſt be continually increaſing, and that in a very few years all the difficulties will be entirely ſurmounted · I think that what he ſaid, if concluſive with reſpect to Jamaica, did not apply to the circumſtances of the other iſlands. Nor, Sir, does it appear to me, that the circumſtance ſtated by my Honourable Friend is to be depended upon for furniſhing ſo certain and effectual an increaſe of population, as a plan for providing the iſlands with a ſufficient additional number of females.

There is now a total diſregard among the Negroes to all religion and morality ; and a mode of proceeding is therefore extremely neceſſary, which may tend to correct their morals by regulating their domeſtic life : and this, Sir, in time, would infallibly decreaſe the anxiety and fears of thoſe under whoſe protection they are, and unite all more cloſely as members of the ſame ſociety. But, circumſtanced as they now are, the Planters cannot rely upon them ; and therefore ſome farther importation appears to me neceſſary, not only for their future ſupply, but alſo for their ſafety and comfort.

I own that, having ſeriouſly in my own mind revolved theſe conſiderations, I almoſt deſpaired of finding any Gentleman of ſufficient weight in this Houſe, having alſo the authority of an official ſituation, who would take upon himſelf the taſk of digeſting and bringing forward a plan equal to the accompliſhment of the great end propoſed, which is the combination of true and rational humanity, with that ſubſtantial juſtice which is due to all the parties concerned.

The mode ſuggeſted by the Right Honourable Gentleman appears to me incapable of being altered to any conſiderable advantage, except indeed that my mind does not yet go to the point of granting liberty to the children born on the iſlands: and I ſhould imagine that the trade might be permitted to exiſt for a few years longer, poſſibly eight, ten, or twelve, under ſuch arrangements as ſhould ſatisfy the minds even of thoſe who contend for an immediate Abolition, by framing ſuch regulations as ſhould introduce a kind of management among

among the Negroes in the Weſt Indies, favourable to their intereſts and ſecurity, and of courſe to their future happineſs.

One ſpecies of regulation which I ſhould propoſe will operate as a fountain of perpetual increaſe to their numbers; I mean a greater encouragement to the importation of females than males, by means of a bounty on the former or by ſubjecting the latter to a heavier duty, which would act as a ſpecies of bounty till the natural equality of numbers ſhall be found to be reſtored.

As another mode of increaſing population, ſomething might be done in the way of giving land or money to thoſe who ſhould raiſe a certain number of children, and premiums to thoſe who ſhould find means of alleviating negro labour by machines for huſbandry, or the ſubſtitution of cattle.

I never remember to have heard any ſcheme propoſed before, analagous to this, which my Honourable Friend has now brought forward: and as, notwithſtanding the intimate and unreſerved communication which I have the pleaſure to enjoy with him, it has never happened that this ſubject has been a topick of converſation between us; I muſt therefore be ignorant of the extent of his ideas relating to it: yet I am perſuaded he would not have offered his obſervations to the Houſe without intending very ſpeedily to ſubmit to conſideration ſome ſpecific meaſure of ſubſtantial reform, and ultimate abolition, grounded on the plan which he has mentioned; in which I ſhould concur as thinking it likely to be attended with great advantages. At the ſame time I cannot but recollect on what ground this queſtion has been argued by my Honourable Friend who moved it. I certainly have invariably wiſhed the accompliſhment of the ſame object with him, though I cannot but hope that his mode will not be adopted: I mean that of an immediate Abolition of the Slave *Trade*, as it is called; though it certainly does not deſerve that name. It is not a trade, and ought not to be continued. I am ſatisfied that in a very ſhort period of years it will ceaſe to be the reproach of this nation, and the *torment of Africa*. Wiſe and well digeſted regulations, by which it would very ſoon be utterly deſtroyed, would not only be productive of great benefit to this country, but would indiſputably be peculiarly a bleſſing to the Weſt India Iſlands. And I am confident that they are as anxious as we can be to obtain this object; provided

provided it can be obtained without any material injury to their eſſential intereſts.

I have now, Sir, very little more, with which to trouble the Houſe. Had it not been, indeed, for the circumſtance of my Honourab e Friend, who ſpoke laſt, bringing forward a propoſition ſo perfectly coinciding with my own ſentiments, and which ſtruck ſo forcibly on my mind, I ſhould not, perhaps, have thought it neceſſary to have delivered my opinion in this debate.

As to my other Honourable Friend who introduced this buſineſs; I hope he will not regard any obſervations I have made, or what I am about to ſay, as meant perſonally to himſelf. But as he has fully explained his intention to be immediate abolition, though his motion does not abſolutely expreſs it, I cannot but think that it would have been dealing more fairly with the Committee to have inſerted that idea in explicit terms. Being aware of his intention I cannot allow myſelf to ſupport his motion: but I conſole myſelf with the hope, that a meaſure will very ſpeedily be brought forward which I ſhall be able moſt cordially to ſupport and approve.

The Right Honourable WILLIAM WINDHAM roſe, but ſat down again, perceiving Mr. Fox had alſo riſen.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES JAMES FOX.—— Although, Sir, what has been lately ſaid by one Right Honourable Gentleman, muſt carry with it more weight than any thing I can offer on this ſubject, I do confeſs that while I was attending to him, I felt infinite uneaſineſs inſtead of any ſatisfaction: and I cannot help riſing to expreſs, that I have never heard a more ſevere or more efficacious reſiſtance made to the Honourable Gentleman's motion. I do not mean to inſinuate that the Gentlemen who ſo ſpoke were not ſerious—but ſomething ſo much more miſchievous has been ſaid, and ſomething ſo much more like a foundation has been laid for preſerving, not only for years to come, but for aught I know, *for ever*, that deteſtable traffic, that I cannot excuſe myſelf from ſtating with the utmoſt plainneſs, the

grounds

grounds upon which I act in this moſt important concern. I muſt with all the zeal and force of which I am maſter, deprecate all ſuch deceptions and deluſions upon the country. They may not be intentionally ſo: but I muſt call every thing deception and deluſion, which may prevent the Committee from ſeeing the buſineſs in its true light—From ſeeing what alone is and muſt be the queſtion,—*Whether this execrable Slave Trade, is fit to be continued, or muſt be aboliſhed?*

The Honourable Gentlemen, call themſelves *moderate men*; but upon this ſubject, I confeſs, I neither feel, nor deſire to feel, any thing like the ſentiment of moderation —Sir, to talk of moderation, upon this matter, reminds me of a paſſage in Middleton's Life of Cicero — there is one part defective, namely, the tranſlation, but it is equally applicable to my preſent purpoſe; he ſays, "To enter a man's houſe and kill him, his wife, and family, in the night, is certainly a moſt heinous crime, and deſerving of death. But to break open his houſe, to murder him, his wife, and all his children, in the night, may ſtill be very right, *provided it is done with moderation.*"

This is abſurd, I think, it will be ſaid; and yet Sir, it is not ſo abſurd as to ſay the Slave Trade may be carried on with moderation; for if you cannot break into a *ſingle houſe*, if you cannot rob and murder a ſingle man, with moderation; with what moderation can you break up a *whole country?* can you pillage and deſtroy a *whole nation?* Which, if it had ſenſe and ſpirit to reſiſt a publick injury, you could not—you would not *dare*, to do. Indeed—indeed Sir, in an affair of this nature, I do not profeſs *moderation!* Sir, I never could think of this abolition, but as a queſtion of ſimple juſtice. It is only, Whether we ſhould authorize by law, reſpecting Africa, the commiſſion of crimes, for which, in this country, we ſhould incur the ſevereſt *penalties* of the law; *and even forfeit our lives in the moſt ignominious form.* Notwithſtanding which, the two Honourable Gentlemen think it a queſtion to be treated with moderation, pleading that moderation in arranging this robbery and murder, may be very proper and uſeful.

Bad as every propoſition of this kind is, I ſhould ſtill have liked the preſent one better, if it had gone to any thing ſpecifick—The laſt Right Honourable Gentleman, ſays the Slave Trade is a queſtion, "he cannot contemplate without horror;" and yet he will not give a vote for its immediate deſtruction.

deſtruction. The other Gentleman ſays, "He will not vote for its continuance;" but he is not entirely againſt it. Where is the proof they will *ever* vote for the abolition of it? May they not ſay the ſame thing, whenever you come to declare the time when that event is to take place? If they have any arguments to produce for it, provided any arguments can be urged in favour of murder and robbery, let them be brought forward; let them ſhew that that is law which exiſts in fact in the breach of every law; and let them then explain to us how ſuch enormities can by any manœuvres be rendered fit and proper for the Houſe to continue, for a few years, or even for a few days longer.

I will ſuppoſe, if you pleaſe, that the Weſt India Iſlands are likely to want Slaves, on account of the diſproportion of the ſexes. How is this to be cured? A Right Honourable Gentleman propoſes a bounty on an importation of females—or in other words, he propoſes to make up this deficiency, by offering a premium to any crew of unprincipled and ſavage ruffians, who will attack and carry off any of the females of Africa!—*a bounty from the Parliament of Britain* that ſhall make the fortune of any man, or ſet of men, who ſhall kidnap or ſteal any unfortunate females from that continent! who ſhall bring them over as ſlaves, in order that they may be uſed for breeding ſlaves!—who ſhall kill their huſbands, fathers, or relations, or ſhall inſtigate any others to kill them, in order that theſe females may be procured!—I ſhould like to ſee the Right Honourable Gentleman *bring up* ſuch a clauſe—I ſhould like to ſee how his clauſe would be worded—I could like to know who would be the man who would dare to pen ſuch a clauſe.

I, Sir, for my part, complain throughout of the whole ſyſtem on which this trade is founded; and I wiſh to expoſe the conduct of thoſe who take credit to themſelves by treating this ſubject as a *moderate* buſineſs. One Honourable Gentleman, the only perſon, I think, who has acted with fairneſs on that ſide of the queſtion, declares that he reſiſts us in our whole attempt, and ſays, the trade ought to go on for ever, and ought not to be aboliſhed. In truth, Sir, I think that all thoſe members who have ſpoken the moſt directly againſt the abolition, have made as much conceſſion to us, in ſubſtance, though not perhaps in words, as theſe Honourable Gentlemen, who are for Gradual Abolition.

If

If we are to be ſatisfied with aſſertions, we ought to remember, that on laſt year's defeat, it was held out that ſome meaſure would be ſpeedily ſubmitted to the conſideration of the Houſe—a whole twelvemonth, however, has paſſed, and no ſtep has been taken. Gentlemen now come and declare, they are for aboliſhing the Slave Trade *gradually*—but I much fear, if it had not been for our renewal of the queſtion, all thoſe gradual meaſures, would not even have been named, and the Slave Trade would have been now quite undiſturbed. For though ſo many Gentlemen ſeem to ſay, that adequate means ought to be uſed to bring about ſo deſirable an end, they really hold out no means to this Houſe, for carrying this end into execution. And when ſo large a part of this ſeſſion has paſſed without our having heard of any intention of propoſing thoſe plans of moderation, what can I ſay? What opinion can I entertain, but that thoſe ideas of regulation are only fit for the purpoſe of totally defeating the propoſition of my Honourable Friend.

One Honourable Gentleman declares it to be his intention gradually to aboliſh the Slave Trade, by meliorating the ſtate of the negroes in the Iſlands, and thereby rendering it unneceſſary. But the Honourable mover of the buſineſs, ſays, with far more wiſdom and practicability, "I will gradually produce the Abolition of Slavery, by immediately aboliſhing the *Slave Trade*—and I will never ceaſe from proſecuting my plan till the object ſhall be accompliſhed."—What ſays the other Honourable Gentleman? Does it appear probable, from the zeal and fervency he has hitherto ſhewn, that he will proſecute this ſcheme of Weſt India reformation till there ſhall be ultimately an Abolition of the Slave Trade? He ſays, "I will not adopt this meaſure, becauſe it ſeems an invaſion upon property." But ſurely we may prohibit our ſubjects from committing crimes, without our being thereby chargeable with taking away the property of the Weſt Indians: which laſt indeed is not *our* plan, but that of the Right Honourable Gentleman himſelf, who is not contented with taking the property, or rather the perſons, of the Africans; but alſo propoſes to take from the Weſt Indians the ſlaves which are already theirs; and all this to ſhew his *tenderneſs for property!*

His propoſed mode too, by which this abolition of ſlavery there is to be accompliſhed, is not a little curious. Firſt of all,

all, the children are to be *born free*; then to be educated at the expence of thoſe to whom the father belongs.—The race of future freemen, he ſays, ſhall not be without education, like the preſent miſerable ſlaves. But then it occurred to the Right Honourable Gentleman, that they could not be educated for nothing: in order, therefore, to repay this expence, ſays he, when educated, they ſhall be ſlaves for ten or fifteen years; and ſo we will get over that difficulty. They are to have the education of a freeman, in order to qualify them for being free: and after they have been ſo educated, then they ſhall go and be ſlaves.—But as this free education may poſſibly unfit them for ſubmitting to ſlavery; ſo after they have been compelled to bow under the yoke of ſervitude for this term of ten or fifteen years, they may then, perhaps, be equally unfit to become free, and therefore may remain ſlaves, for a great number of years longer, or even for life.

Now, what can be more viſionary than ſuch a mode of education for the purpoſe of emancipation? — If any one ſcheme can be imagined more abſurd than another, I think it is the one now propoſed.

The Honourable Gentleman that introduced this motion, very properly ſays, "as this practice, which by a ſtrange perverſion of words is called the Slave *Trade*, ought indiſputably to be conſidered as a moſt enormous crime, rather than a commerce; it is our duty to prohibit and puniſh the perpetration of it, even though it ſhould not be in our power effectually to annihilate it."—No, ſays the Right Honourable Gentleman, for though I do not argue, as others have done that becauſe the French, Spaniards, and Dutch will do it, that we are thereby juſtified in taking our ſhare; yet as our colonies will get ſlaves by the means of theſe other nations if we abandon it, therefore we had better ourſelves afford them the ſupply.

Now Sir, I, on the contrary, have no difficulty in ſaying, in the firſt place, that if they are to be ſupplied, I wiſh it to be by the French, Spaniards, and Dutch, or any other nation under Heaven, rather than by ourſelves. But, again, does he think that we have no *external* power, no authority to prevent the importation of Slaves, when he *allows* us an *internal* authority; an authority with reſpect to the education of children,

dren, the emancipation of Slaves, and the Lord knows what? —Sir, the Houſe begins to ſee that this trade is not conſiſtent with juſtice, and they feel themſelves unhappy at that ſight. An honourable Gentleman who ſpoke early in the debate, acknowledged that many enormities were practiſed in it and were to be found in the evidence on your table; but, ſays he, would it be fair to take the character of this country, from the records of the Old Bailey?—I do not at all wonder, Sir, that when this ſubject was mentioned, the Old Bailey naturally occurred to his recollection: the facts which are deſcribed, are aſſociated in all our minds with the ideas of *criminal juſtice*; but the Honourable Gentleman forgot the eſſential difference between the two caſes. When we learn from the Old Bailey Records that crimes have been committed in this country, we learn at the ſame moment that they are *puniſhed with tranſportation and death*—when we hear of theſe crimes committed in the Slave Trade, we find them paſſed over *with impunity*—nay, we even ſee them rewarded, and the perpetrators going out again under the ſame maſters to commit more.

There has been an accuſation againſt the Committee which ſat in the Old Jewry, for having diſtributed copies of the evidence; I had the honour of being one of that Committee, though perhaps from other avocations, not a very conſtant attendant; my advice was to diſtribute them as largely as could be done: *for I do heartily wiſh, that there ſhould not be a man in this nation who can read, but ſhould ſee the evidence before the Houſe.* I am ſure Sir, it would produce on the country that effect, which I truſt it will ultimately upon the Houſe of Commons, and enſure an immediate Abolition.

In diſparagement of ſome of thoſe who had given their teſtimony, it is objected to them by one Honourable Gentleman, that they were, many of them, *poor people*. Why, Sir, if they have poverty, they may have veracity.—I do not know but theſe two things may go together. The Honourable Gentleman, however, took ſpecial care to inform us, that his veracity was not to be objected to, on that ſcore; and I believe it is not, but if his circumſtances had been like theirs, I dare ſay he would have deemed his own evidence, as credible, and as fit to be received.—Then he brought againſt them the evidence of Lord Rodney, Lord Macartney, Admiral Edwards, Admiral Arbuthnot,

buthnot, &c. &c. &c. whoſe characters as commanders I revere. But have *they* ſaid any thing about the Slave Trade? Have they even told you that they have ever *ſeen* the coaſt of Africa? Do they know any thing of the Slave Trade, except from the ſame ſource, which every Gentleman in this Houſe has it in his power to reſort to—the Evidence upon our table? They have ſpoken of nothing but of the *Weſt Indies*. I am not aware they have had any intelligence from Africa upon the ſubject; and I aſk would it not then be thought a ſhuffling trick of a counſel, if he were to take the teſtimony of thoſe men becauſe they are Lords or great people, to the diſparagement of the evidence of poorer perſons? when the teſtimony of theſe laſt is directly to the point in queſtion, and that of the great Lords is on a ſubject *altogether ſeparate and diſtinct*. Beſides all that theſe great men have ſaid, is at beſt *negative*, and every thing which has been advanced by the others is *poſitive*, and remains uncontradicted.

As to the mode of procuring Slaves, even the honourable Gentleman near me (Col. Tarleton) has not ventured to ſay that it has *any thing like fairneſs* in it. I think the leaſt diſreputable way of accounting for the ſupply of Slaves, is to repreſent them as having been convicted of crimes, by legal authority. Now, Sir, if the number of them proves on inquiry, to be ſuch that it is impoſſible to believe they have been all guilty even of any crime whatever, much leſs of crimes deſerving ſo great a puniſhment as perpetual Slavery, this pretence ſinks into nothing, and the very urging it, only diſgraces thoſe who can ſatisfy themſelves with defending a practice ſo execrable, on grounds ſo futile, and by a ſuppoſition ſo abſurd. What does the Houſe think is the whole number of theſe *convicts* exported annually from Africa?—EIGHTY THOUSAND. But I will grant, if you will, that it is Britain alone that takes all her *convicts*, and that the Slaves taken by other nations are not convicts, but are carried off by ſhameful fraud and violence. Britain alone, I will ſuppoſe, is ſo ſcrupulous, as to receive none that have not legally forfeited their liberty, leaving all the fraud of the Slave Trade to other countries. Britain, even on this ſuppoſition, takes off no leſs than THIRTY OR FORTY THOUSAND annually of African *Convicts!* Now, Sir, is it credible—is it poſſible for us to perſuade ourſelves, that even this number can have been legally convicted of crimes,

crimes, for which they have juſtly forfeited their liberty? The ſuppoſition is ridiculous.

But *even allowing* all theſe men to have been condemned to ſlavery by due legal proceſs, and according to the ſtricteſt principles of juſtice; ſurely Sir, in this view, it is rather *condeſcending* in this country, and rather new alſo for us, to take on ourſelves the taſk of tranſporting the convicts of other parts of the world, much more of thoſe whom we call barbarous! Suppoſe now, the court of France or Spain were to intimate a wiſh that we ſhould perform this office for *their* criminals—I believe we ſhould hardly find terms that could be ſtrong enough to expreſs our ſenſe of the inſult—But for *Africa*—for its petty ſtates—for its loweſt and moſt miſerable criminals, we accept the office with ſatisfaction and eagerneſs!

Now, Sir, a word or two as to the ſpecific crimes for which the Africans are ſold as criminals—*Witchcraft* in particular is one.—Of this we entertain ſo ſacred a horror, that there being no objects to be found at home, we make, as if it were, a cruſade to Africa, to ſhew our indignation at the ſin!—As to *Adultery*, to be ſure, this does not ſtand exactly on the ſame ground. Adulterers *are* to be met with in this country—but then this crime is, I ſuppoſe, *ſo common* here, that we know not whom to ſingle out for puniſhment from among the number. Determined, however, to ſhew our indignation of this crime alſo, we ſend to *Africa* to puniſh it. We there prove our anger at it to be not a little ſevere—and, leſt Adulterers ſhould any where in the world eſcape puniſhment, we degrade ourſelves, even in Africa, to be their executioners.

Thus, Sir, we ſend to Africa to puniſh *witchcraft*, becauſe there are *no witches* to be found here; and we ſend to the ſame country to puniſh *Adultery*, becauſe the Adulterers here are *too many* to incur puniſhment.

Let the Houſe remember too that what I have here ſtated is, even by their own account, the *very beſt* ſtate of the caſe which the advocates for the Slave Trade have pretended to ſet up.

But let us now ſee, how far *facts* will bear them out even in theſe miſerable pretexts. In one part of the evidence, we find a well known Black Trader brings a girl to a Slave ſhip to be ſold—The Captain buys her.—Some perſons come on board afterwards and find out who ſhe is—They learn who the trader is that ſold the poor girl—and they go and catch *him*;

bring him to the ſame ſhip and ſell *him* for a Slave.—What ſays the Black Trader to the Captain? "Do you buy *me* grand trader?" "Yes ſays the Captain, I will buy you or any one elſe—If they will ſell you, I'll buy you." Now, Sir, there is great reaſon for dwelling on this ſtory; certainly at the firſt view, it appears to be an inſtance of the moſt bare-faced villainy, and of nothing elſe. But if we examine well into the ſubject, we ſhall ſee that what happened in this caſe is, and ever muſt be, the common and ordinary conduct, that reſults from the very nature and circumſtances of the trade itſelf. How could this Captain decide? What means had he even of inquiring who was the real owner of this girl? Whether the grand trader or not; or who was the owner of the grand trader? The Captain ſaid when they ſold the trader, the ſame thing which he ſaid when the trader ſold the girl, and the ſame thing too, which he always had ſaid, and always muſt ſay, and which *all Slave Captains* muſt ſay—namely—"I cannot know who has a right to ſell you—it is no affair of mine—If they'll ſell you, I'll buy you—I cannot enter into theſe controverſies.—If any man offers me a Slave, my rule is to buy him, and aſk no queſtions." That the trade is in fact carried on in this manner, is indiſputable; and that wars are made in Africa, ſolely for the purpoſe of ſupplying the European Slave Trade, is equally ſo. *Is there any man that denies it? I do not believe a ſingle Gentleman in this committee will now dare to controvert ſo well eſtabliſhed a fact*; and it is for this reaſon, I ſhall not miſpend your time in adducing additional proof.

I will now enter into ſome particulars relative to what happened in the river Camaroon, already ſtated to you by the Honourable Gentleman. This affair came out upon an action tried before the Court of Common Pleas, on the firſt of March laſt, before Lord Loughborough. It was brought by one M'Dowal againſt Gregſon and Co. for wages due to the Plaintiff. The facts were directly in iſſue, ſo that by this ſtrange concurrence of events, you have what you could hardly have expected:—You have a *judicial proof* of the whole tranſactions; containing among others, the following important circumſtances: A Chieftain, of the name of Quarmo, who meant to execute his revenge upon the Slave Captain for the ſavage violence which the Captain had before committed, goes to him, and ſays, "I want to

go

go up the country to make trade, if you will help me by giving me ſome arms and gunpowder." The propoſal is at once agreed to. Now, Sir, as the Chief *meant to deceive* the Captain, when he aſked for theſe arms and gunpowder, we may be very ſure he would uſe juſt that ſort of art, which would be moſt *likely* to deceive him—he would not make a propoſition of any extraordinary kind, that might alarm the Captain's ſuſpicions—the reaſon he would pretend would be the moſt uſual, and common, and natural, he could think of. His plea, therefore, of borrowing arms to make *trade*, (alias *war*, for trade,) was the *natural* plea, and for this reaſon it ſucceeded. It was ſo uſual, ſo much the every day's practice, that the Slave Captain immediately conſented as it were *through habit* to the requeſt, which he tells you himſelf, he had *often granted before*; and through the ſucceſs of this fraud, his deſtruction was accompliſhed. In ſhort, Sir, I again and again call on any man to ſhew me, how this trade can be carried on, but by ſuch means, that if a man were to practiſe the ſame in this country, he would juſtly be *puniſhed with death*.

But, Sir, we are accuſed of enthuſiaſm. Are we then fanatics? are we enthuſiaſts, becauſe we cry, Do not rob, Abſtain from murder? I have ever conſidered this buſineſs as a moſt unjuſt and horrible perſecution of our fellow creatures. But I am told I muſt be under ſome impreſſion of enthuſiaſm. If by that expreſſion be meant zeal and warmth, I freely acknowledge it; I glory in it. Enthuſiaſm, when it ariſes out of a juſt cauſe, is that which makes men act in it with energy. It is that without which nothing great was ever done ſince the creation of the world. Enthuſiaſm of this ſort I hope therefore I ſhall always poſſeſs, it is what in this caſe we pride ourſelves in, we glory in it. And, Sir, this being as I have ſaid, *a cauſe of juſtice*, it is one in which I cannot admit of any compromiſe; for there can be no compromiſe between Juſtice and Injuſtice.

An Honourable Member has ſaid it would have been fairer in the Gentleman who moved the queſtion, if he had expreſſed in the terms of it the full extent of his own meaning. Though the words of the motion do not ſay *immediate* Abolition, he did I think moſt clearly and openly declare *his* intention was immediately to aboliſh; and to the motion itſelf

there is no fair objection on this ground. He has drawn the motion, agreeably to the forms of the Houſe, and with perfect good ſenſe, in my opinion. He ſays, "When I bring in my bill, I mean to let it be open to amendment;" it is however reaſonable for us to expect, that the Honourable Gentleman will himſelf wiſh to have the blanks filled up in the manner that is moſt correſpondent to the feelings of his own mind upon the ſubject.

What then is the preciſe queſtion now before the Committee for their conſideration? The queſtion before you, Sir, is only "whether this Houſe is ready now to ſay, that the Slave Trade ſhall be aboliſhed, and this *at any time*." Some Gentlemen may be for its being aboliſhed in ſix years, ſome may be for its being aboliſhed in twelve; ſome in ſix months; but all who are for the Abolition *at all*, ought indiſputably to vote for this motion. When we come into the *Committee* on this bill, any Honourable Gentleman may then move a ſhort period. *I* ſay it ought to be aboliſhed *immediately*. Others may think it ought to be two, three, ſix, ten, or twenty years! I own I think they might as well propoſe a thouſand. But by this motion as it now ſtands, they will have an opportunity of naming what term they pleaſe, and they ought therefore to vote now with us, if they mean to aboliſh at all.

But mark the conduct of the Right Honourable Gentlemen.—Notwithſtanding they declare themſelves friends to the Abolition, they will, by the conduct they ſeem now about to follow, give additional weight and ſtrength to that majority which decided againſt the Abolition laſt year. By the courſe which I propoſe they would put an end to that majority. I was in hopes they would have done ſomething, though it ſhould be ever ſo ſmall, towards forwarding the object: but theſe hopes entirely fail me.

I have been both ſorry and aſhamed to hear a Right Honourable Member of ſo much weight and authority as the Gentleman I allude to, profeſs to us, that, "he had never yet delivered any opinion on ſo important a ſubject as this is." Surely, Sir, when the chair of the Committee was filled by the Honourable Baronet, who ſo properly and worthily now fills it, and when that Right Honourable Member was thereby left at liberty to ſpeak and vote upon the queſtion, the Committee had ſome right to expect the benefit of his judgment and

and abilities; and I think the Right Honourable Gentleman himſelf muſt have felt humiliated, at having to go uſeleſsly out of the Houſe, or to run behind the Chair, without giving any opinion or aſſiſtance whatever in the deciſion of a queſtion of ſuch magnitude; a queſtion alſo in which the plaineſt principles of juſtice, and the deareſt rights of humanity are ſo involved.

Another Right Honourable Gentleman has ſaid, "in a little time we ſhall find that this trade will be aboliſhed." I believe ſo too. The criminality of it is more ſeen, and this will aboliſh it. Petitions have been preſented to this Houſe which cannot be reſiſted; and the public (who have been enlightened by the evidence and the publications of the ſociety in the Old Jewry) have ſhewn a ſolicitude and zeal on this ſubject, which cannot fail of accompliſhing their object.

Sir, I have been long enough in Parliament to have ſeen petitions on a variety of occaſions preſented to this Houſe, and I do not know upon what principle you can ſpeak ſlightingly of them, as one Honourable Gentleman has done, unleſs you can bring actual evidence of improper practices: unleſs you can prove for inſtance, that ſome names have been forged, or ſome fraudulent means uſed to obtain ſignatures.

The Honourable Gentleman ſays he has two letters to ſhew that to ſome of theſe there are falſe names. How does he know the letters themſelves are not falſe? How does he know the ſignature to that letter, which purports to be written by a ſchool-boy at Cheſter, is not as fictitious as he ſtates the petitions to be? If he can prove it was not the petition of thoſe whoſe names are ſigned to it, let it be proved. But, Sir, it is perfectly ridiculous to ſuppoſe that ſuch a number of petitions from all parts of the kingdom could have been fabricated. If they were, why then have we not as many fabricated for the preſervation of the trade, as for the abolition? "So we might," ſays the Honourable Gentleman, "but the people *on our ſide* of the queſtion could not *condeſcend* to uſe ſuch means." If any Slave Traders, or Captains of ſlave ſhips, could any where have been found capable of degrading themſelves ſo far as to ſign falſe names to petitions, or to aſk others to ſign them on falſe repreſentations, we might in this way of reaſoning have had our table equally heaped with petitions on their ſide of the queſtion. No, Sir,

there is no fair objection on this ground. He has drawn the motion, agreeably to the forms of the Houſe, and with perfect good ſenſe, in my opinion. He ſays, "When I bring in my bill, I mean to let it be open to amendment;" it is however reaſonable for us to expect, that the Honourable Gentleman will himſelf wiſh to have the blanks filled up in the manner that is moſt correſpondent to the feelings of his own mind upon the ſubject.

What then is the preciſe queſtion now before the Committee for their conſideration? The queſtion before you, Sir, is only "whether this Houſe is ready now to ſay, that the Slave Trade ſhall be aboliſhed, and this *at any time*." Some Gentlemen may be for its being aboliſhed in ſix years, ſome may be for its being aboliſhed in twelve; ſome in ſix months; but all who are for the Abolition *at all*, ought indiſputably to vote for this motion. When we come into the *Committee* on this bill, any Honourable Gentleman may then move a ſhort period. *I* ſay it ought to be aboliſhed *immediately*. Others may think it ought to be two, three, ſix, ten, or twenty years! I own I think they might as well propoſe a thouſand. But by this motion as it now ſtands, they will have an opportunity of naming what term they pleaſe, and they ought therefore to vote now with us, if they mean to aboliſh at all.

But mark the conduct of the Right Honourable Gentlemen.—Notwithſtanding they declare themſelves friends to the Abolition, they will, by the conduct they ſeem now about to follow, give additional weight and ſtrength to that majority which decided againſt the Abolition laſt year. By the courſe which I propoſe they would put an end to that majority. I was in hopes they would have done ſomething, though it ſhould be ever ſo ſmall, towards forwarding the object: but theſe hopes entirely fail me.

I have been both ſorry and aſhamed to hear a Right Honourable Member of ſo much weight and authority as the Gentleman I allude to, profeſs to us, that, "he had never yet delivered any opinion on ſo important a ſubject as this is." Surely, Sir, when the chair of the Committee was filled by the Honourable Baronet, who ſo properly and worthily now fills it, and when that Right Honourable Member was thereby left at liberty to ſpeak and vote upon the queſtion, the Committee had ſome right to expect the benefit of his judgment

and

and abilities; and I think the Right Honourable Gentleman himself must have felt humiliated, at having to go uſeleſsly out of the Houſe, or to run behind the Chair, without giving any opinion or aſſiſtance whatever in the deciſion of a queſtion of ſuch magnitude; a queſtion alſo in which the plaineſt principles of juſtice, and the deareſt rights of humanity are ſo involved.

Another Right Honourable Gentleman has ſaid, "in a little time we ſhall find that this trade will be aboliſhed." I believe ſo too. The criminality of it is more ſeen, and this will aboliſh it. Petitions have been preſented to this Houſe which cannot be reſiſted; and the public (who have been enlightened by the evidence and the publications of the ſociety in the Old Jewry) have ſhewn a ſolicitude and zeal on this ſubject, which cannot fail of accompliſhing their object.

Sir, I have been long enough in Parliament to have ſeen petitions on a variety of occaſions preſented to this Houſe, and I do not know upon what principle you can ſpeak ſlightingly of them, as one Honourable Gentleman has done, unleſs you can bring actual evidence of improper practices: unleſs you can prove for inſtance, that ſome names have been forged, or ſome fraudulent means uſed to obtain ſignatures.

The Honourable Gentleman ſays he has two letters to ſhew that to ſome of theſe there are falſe names. How does he know the letters themſelves are not falſe? How does he know the ſignature to that letter, which purports to be written by a ſchool-boy at Cheſter, is not as fictitious as he ſtates the petitions to be? If he can prove it was not the petition of thoſe whoſe names are ſigned to it, let it be proved. But, Sir, it is perfectly ridiculous to ſuppoſe that ſuch a number of petitions from all parts of the kingdom could have been fabricated. If they were, why then have we not as many fabricated for the preſervation of the trade, as for the abolition? "So we might," ſays the Honourable Gentleman, "but the people *on our ſide* of the queſtion could not *condeſcend* to uſe ſuch means." If any Slave Traders, or Captains of ſlave ſhips, could any where have been found capable of degrading themſelves ſo far as to ſign falſe names to petitions, or to aſk others to ſign them on falſe repreſentations, we might in this way of reaſoning have had our table equally heaped with petitions on their ſide of the queſtion. No, Sir,

the reaſon why we have none of their petitions, is, that the detection would have been eaſy; and it muſt be equally eaſy if the petitions are mere forgeries on our ſide of the queſtion: and if the Honourable Gentleman really can find, among all the Slave Captains whom he knows, none who are equal to ſuch practices as theſe, I give him joy on his connections, for he muſt be connected with very conſcientious Guinea Captains indeed!

It has been urged that we have no occaſion to adopt theſe violent meaſures in order to put an end to the Slave Trade, for it will ſoon come to a natural period by the gradual civilization of Africa. Sir, it is impoſſible; as long as this accurſed trade exiſts there can be no civilization; ſcarcely a ſtep towards it; while we continue thus to excite men to war and every ſpecies of villainy, can there be any civilization in a country, or any thing that can tend to make its inhabitants happy? Here is the very refinement of our cruelty. We create every kind and degree of immorality; we ourſelves render the people ſavages, and then we ſay, "thoſe men are ſo ſavage, that it is bettering their condition "to tranſport them as ſlaves to the Weſt Indies."

We have heard the miſerable heart-rending tale of thoſe horrid ſcenes which have paſſed in St. Domingo: doubtleſs the revolted negroes have there committed devaſtations and murders, of which the very relation makes a man ſhudder with horror. But where did theſe Blacks *learn* this cruelty? Who *inſtructed* them to be brutal and ferocious? They have learnt it, Sir, from civilized Europeans, and they have learnt it in the Weſt Indies: they gained their inſtruction from thoſe who had tyrannized over them, and from their own maſters; the oppreſſion practiſed on themſelves was in their remembrance, and we may aſſure ourſelves this has cauſed them to wreak their vengeance with ſuch fury. Can any man wiſh our Iſlands to be in a like ſituation? would you expoſe them to ſimilar ſituations? or would you take the means of preventing it? Stop the farther importation of ſlaves,—do not add to the number of *thoſe ſlaves in particular* by whom theſe outrages have been chiefly committed. Even Mr. Long's hiſtory of Jamaica points out the probable benefits of ſuch a prohibition. Nor does the good effect of the meaſure of Abolition, even upon our Iſlands, end here. Beſides leſſening moſt materially the danger of inſurrections like that of St. Domingo,

St. Domingo, it will lead to a melioration of the condition of the preſent ſlaves there, by eaſy and obvious means; to mild and gentle treatment from their maſters, which ſo far from diminiſhing, will rather increaſe their real power and authority. When this happy change of ſyſtem ſhall have arrived, you will be able to depend on the Creole Blacks for the defence of their country, as much as on the Whites themſelves.

But it is ſaid, "Why are we to be ſo very attentive to the inhabitants of Africa, and yet not enter into the queſtion of regulating the preſent ſyſtem of ſlavery in the Weſt Indies. Why are we to be ſo tender of the African Blacks, and yet have no tenderneſs for thoſe in our own iſlands?" Sir, I deny that I aſk for any *tenderneſs* to the people of Africa. I only ſay, do not rob and murder them to gratify your avarice. Is this aſking for tenderneſs? And as to the ſlaves in the Weſt Indies, I do feel every thing for them. I do ſay, that the ſlavery, even of a perſon brought up and bred in it, is much to be pitied. This, however, is far leſs grievous than the ſlavery of an imported African. To be the ſlave of the man that brought him up, and in the ſame country where he was born, is quite a different thing from a man's being forced from his own country into ſlavery, torn from his friends, deprived of that freedom which he has enjoyed till he was grown up, and made to work, contrary to all his former habits, under the whip of a driver, in a new quarter of the globe.

Anxiouſly, however, do I deſire to alleviate the miſery alſo of thoſe unhappy ſlaves already in the Weſt Indies; but as to the mode of doing it, and as to the right we may have to make regulations on that ſubject, all this is a ſeparate conſideration. But to argue for regulations in the iſlands to be previouſly made by us, as the beſt means of abolition—to argue for this ſlow, and doubtful, and circuitous way of aboliſhing the trade, when we can do it in a direct way and inſtantly, is in other words to ſay, "Do not do a thing which you are quite able and competent to do, till you have by degrees effected another thing, which other thing you are not competent, and perhaps not able to do at all!"

Sir, I now come to that which I conſider really as the foundation of the whole buſineſs. The more I think on the

ſubject, the more I reflect on all the arguments, miſerable as they are! which our adverſaries bring forward in their defence; the more am I convinced that there is one ground, and only one ground, on which it is poſſible for their ſide of the queſtion to ſtand. It is an argument which they did reſort to at the firſt, which they have not uſed to day; but which really, Sir, if I were to adviſe them, they ſhould again reſort to, and reſt their whole caſe upon it. I mean that there is a *difference of ſpecies*, between black men and white, which is to be aſſumed from the *difference of colour*. Driven as our antagoniſts have been from this ground, and aſhamed of it as they now are, they really have no other. Why, Sir, if we can but eſtabliſh that blacks *are men* like ourſelves, is it poſſible that we can have any patience on this ſubject? Apply the ſame caſe to France, which is happening every day in Africa; the difference, in fact, is only *in the colour of the people of the two countries*.

There exiſts now in France (or in ſeveral of its provinces) a very great degree of animoſity; and there are two contending parties—I believe indeed the accounts are much exaggerated—But let us ſuppoſe now, that at Marſeilles, for inſtance, or ſome other port, the Ariſtocrates were to ſell the Democrates as faſt as they could catch them; and the Democrates were to ſell the Ariſtocrates in like manner, and that we had ſhips hovering on the coaſt, ready to carry them all off as ſlaves to Jamaica, or ſome other iſland in the Weſt Indies. If we were to hear of ſuch a circumſtance, would it not ſtrike us with horror? What is the reaſon? Becauſe theſe men are *of our own colour*. There is no other difference in the two caſes whatever.

I will quote, on this point, one of the antients, by way of proving the ſame thing—no leſs a genius than Ariſtotle—He, wiſhing to eſtabliſh ſome ground of defence for ſlavery, ſays, "*The Barbarians are of a different race from us, and were born to be ſlaves to the Greeks.*" Now, Sir, if any better reaſon could be found out in juſtification of ſlavery, I ſhould think that moſt fertile genius would have been the firſt to diſcover it. He ſaw domeſtic tyranny exerciſed in an extreme degree, and this in ſtates where political tyranny was not ſuffered—He aſked himſelf the reaſon, and after he had ſearched his wonderful

derful invention (finding ſlavery to be the *practice* of his country, and not wiſhing to condemn it) he could reſort to no other argument than that of ſaying, "the Barbarians are inferior to the Greeks *by nature*;" becauſe, forſooth, the Greeks had had ſtrength to conquer them. It is true, many of theſe Barbarians were *of the ſame colour* with the Greeks; ſtill, however, it was neceſſary to eſtabliſh a *diſtinction* in the *nature* of the different men, in order to aſſign any real reaſon for permitting the difference in their *treatment*.

As to ſetting up any diſtinction of nature between people of our *own* colour; it is what no man now will bear to hear of; to ſay there are any Whites of an inferior ſpecies, marked out by nature to be Slaves to other Whites, is not to be borne; it would fill us all with horror to authorize ſlavery any where, on this ground, with reſpect to white men: and is it not quite as unjuſt, becauſe ſome men are black, to ſay there is a natural diſtinction as to them; and that black men, becauſe they are black, ought to be ſlaves? Set aſide difference of colour, and is it not the height of arrogance to allege that becauſe we have ſtrong feelings and cultivated minds, it would be great cruelty to make ſlaves of *us*; but that becauſe *they* are yet ignorant and uncivilized, it is no injury at all to *them*? Such a principle once admitted, lays the foundation of a tyranny and injuſtice that have no end.

Mention has been made of ſome great hardſhips ſuffered on board the tranſports to Botany Bay, by which a large portion of the convicts periſhed; and I am afraid indeed the buſineſs was attended with dreadful circumſtances. The ſtory, however, may appear leſs extraordinary to ſome of us, when we know that the tranſportation was undertaken by *Slave Merchants*, and conducted by a *Slave Captain*. I underſtand, a part of the miſery is attributed to his having uſed ſlave fetters, inſtead of thoſe uſually worn by convicts. That any *mere felons* ſhould have been conveyed to the place of their baniſhment under circumſtances of equal cruelty with *ſlaves* from Africa, is certainly, Sir, a diſgrace to this country, and it ought to conſtitute a charge againſt thoſe perſons concerned in ſo ſcandalous a buſineſs; and I hope and underſtand it will be ſo conſidered by Government.

I remember to have once heard, or read, long before the preſent queſtions were agitated, a well known ſtory of an African,

African who was of the firſt rank in his own country and a man of letters. He was taken in one of thoſe plundering wars, which the Slave Trade gives occaſion to; was carried to Maryland, and ſold as it happened to a remarkably humane and very excellent maſter. His maſter inquired into the caſe, found out that he was educated in the Mahometan religion, that he could read and write Arabic, that he was a man of rank as well as literature, and all the circumſtances being taken into conſideration, he was after a full examination of facts, redeemed and ſent home to Africa.—Now, Sir, if this man with all his advantages, had fallen into the hands, I do not ſay of a hard hearted, but even an ordinary maſter, would he not inevitably have worn out his life in the ſame Egyptian bondage, in which thouſands of his fellow Africans drag on their miſerable days? Put ſuch caſes as theſe home to yourſelves, and you will find the Slave Trade is a thing not to be juſtified, not to be tolerated for a moment, for the ſake of any convenience whatſoever.

As to danger from the want of population in the Iſlands, even this pretext has been completely done away by the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and it is remarkable, that though he was at the pains of going fully into thoſe calculations, inſomuch, that I really thought him too condeſcending in that detail, there has not been the leaſt attempt to controvert any of his ſtatements. Not a ſingle calculation of his has been gone into, by any one of the Gentlemen who are againſt the Abolition of the Trade.—It is a little hard, I think, that *I* ſhould be obliged to be the perſon to do it, but I really muſt complain in this inſtance of a want of reſpect to the Right Honourable Gentleman, from this ſilence, and this on the part of ſome of the Honourable Gentlemen ſitting near him: but the fact I know is, that not the ſhadow of an anſwer could be given; and yet ſo it is, that Gentlemen refuſe to be convinced!

Upon the whole, I ſhall give my opinion of this traffick in a very few words. I believe it to be impolitic—I know it to be inhuman—I am certain it is unjuſt—I think it *ſo* inhuman, that, if the plantations could not be cultivated without it, upon the principles of humanity and juſtice, they ought not to be carried on at all. Even if the objects of it were brute animals, no *humane* man could expoſe them to be treated with

with ſuch wanton cruelty. If the merchandize were totally inanimate, no *honeſt* man could ſupport a trade founded upon ſuch principles of injuſtice. Upon theſe grounds, there is every neceſſity for putting an immediate end to it.

I think the Honourable Gentleman has made preciſely the moſt proper motion in this ſtage of the buſineſs. It confines the Houſe to nothing, provided they are friends to the Abolition, either immediate or future. He has told you his ideas, and thoſe who differ from him as to time, may propoſe their's. Let us reſcue Parliament from the degrading ſituation in which they ſtand at preſent, of having given their ſanction to this trade. Many Gentlemen feel the burden, and are deſirous of being relieved from it. Let us do our duty, and remove this opprobrium from ourſelves; and if other countries follow our example, ſo much the better; if they do not, let us glory in leaving them behind, let us ſhew them that Great Britain deſerves to ſtand as high in the opinion of the world for her juſtice, as I know ſhe does already for her wiſdom, or the ſuperiority of her conſtitution, and for the excellency of her laws, which excite the admiration of ſurrounding countries. But, Sir, I can have no doubt, that the example which we ſhall ſet in aboliſhing the Slave Trade will have a great effect, certainly greater than that of any other country in Europe. What is the preſent ſituation of France with reſpect to her colonies? It is critical and peculiar. One day they talk of Liberty and are inclined to favour the Negroes; another day they check themſelves and ſuſpend their meaſures. It is the timid wavering conduct which the National Aſſembly was prevailed on to adopt, in preference to bold and reſolute meaſures, that has produced all the dreadful miſchiefs at St. Domingo.

Theſe, Sir, are the cruel conſequences of *moderate* meaſures. Deciſion had been mercy; deciſion even againſt the prejudice of their Weſt India Planters, would have been a thouſand times better for thoſe Planters, than indeciſion and half meaſures.

But there are ſome perſons who are fond of throwing out, that our Iſlands will not ſubmit to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, that they will ſay, "We cannot, we will not ſuffer it, and we muſt ſeek out ſome other connection." To this, I very freely anſwer, "If you chuſe to be protected by us,

who

who are beſt able to do it, we will protect you, and we think we can render you more ſervice than any other country; but if you are to be connected with us, IT MUST BE ON THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE. If Britain muſt involve herſelf in this diſhonourable, this bloody buſineſs, for the ſake of the Islands; if theſe are your terms, let the connection ceaſe from this moment.

Perhaps, Sir, there is leſs boldneſs than there appears to be in ſtating this ſo ſtrongly, for I am well perſuaded, that our Weſt India Iſlands too well know the ſuperior advantages of their preſent connection, to break with us on this ground; I am well convinced they will ſay to us, "Though you aboliſh the Slave Trade you ſhall not drive us away from you: to you we muſt ſtill adhere, our habits, our feelings, and what is more our *intereſts*, incline us to prefer your connection to that of any other country. Though you ſhake the Slave Trade off from us, you ſhall never ſhake us off from you." But if they ſhould not ſay this, and if the queſtion be, whether Britain ſhall retain the Slave Trade and the Weſt India Iſlands, or ſhall part with them both together; I do not heſitate a moment in deciding which alternative ſhe ought to take; I declare at once, "BETTER BE WITHOUT THE ISLANDS THAN NOT ABOLISH THE SLAVE TRADE." Let us therefore, this night, act the part which will do us honour; let us vote for bringing in a bill for the abolition. If we fail, which I confeſs I have ſome apprehenſion of, I have only to expreſs my gratitude to the Honourable Gentleman for the part he has taken. He does not need my exhortation to perſiſt; but this will I declare, that whether we vote in a ſmall minority or large one, "*We never will give up the point.*" Whether in this Houſe, or out of this Houſe; in whatſoever ſituation I may ever be; as long as I have a voice to ſpeak, *this queſtion ſhall never be at an end:* if it were poſſible that the Honourable Gentleman could entertain the idea of abandoning it, I would not.

But Sir, even if all thoſe who are engaged in this queſtion were to be removed away, there would never be wanting men alive to their duty who *would cry out for juſtice*, who would maintain a perpetual ſtruggle, till this Trade ſhould be done away.

We who think that theſe things are not merely *impolitick* but *inhuman* and *unjuſt*; that they are not of the nature of

trade,

trade, but that they are *crimes*, *pollutions*, *which ſtain the honour of a country!* We, Sir, will never relax our efforts.

We wiſh to prevent *man from preying upon man*; and we muſt do our duty, let the world think of us as they may. And I poſſeſs the fulleſt confidence that our perſeverance will enſure ſucceſs.

One word more: never let this ſubject be confounded with any ideas of *political* ſlavery. Were I a member of an Arbitrary Government, where the will of the Prince alone was law, I ſhould be as zealous to wipe off ſuch a ſtain as this from that country, as I now am to do it from our own. What means Slavery? A Slave is one whom another man commands at his pleaſure: who belongs not to himſelf, but to his maſter, at whoſe diſpoſal he is in all reſpects; this is *perſonal* ſlavery. Political ſlavery is but a metaphor; it has got the name from its bearing only ſome faint reſemblance to ſlavery, literally ſo called. It has been named Political Slavery, with a view of exciting ſomewhat of that ſame horror againſt it, which Perſonal Slavery is known always to excite. Few men, I believe, carry their ideas of Political Freedom higher than I do; but although I cannot help thinking the People of France under the old Deſpotick Government were enſlaved in one ſenſe; yet their ſtate when compared with Perſonal Slavery, was a ſtate of perfect Freedom. Nor is the difference between any two the moſt diſtant degrees of Political Slavery and Freedom, to be put in competition with the difference between every individual ſlave and free man. Never again, therefore, let our underſtandings be inſulted by confounding two things ſo totally different.

I have not again read to the Houſe, this day, any of thoſe ſhocking accounts, with which I troubled them laſt year. But I repeat "*They are upon evidence!* They ſtand on unqueſtionable authority!" And if any Gentleman has neglected to to attend to theſe cruelties, they nevertheleſs exiſt.

But neither are theſe ſtories neceſſary to my argument. If the ſituation of the Negroes were as happy as ſervitude could make them, I muſt not commit the enormous crime of ſelling man to man; nor permit a practice to continue *which puts an entire bar to the civilization of one whole quarter of the habitable globe*. Many years will not be given us to diſcuſs this ſubject. *This nation will not long permit the conſtant commiſſion*

commiſſion of crimes that ſhock human nature, for the ſake of the Weſt Indies. And if the Weſt India Gentlemen will inſiſt on the continuance of ſuch a trade, they muſt not expect to be very *popular* in this country. *They have* NO RIGHT *to demand that crimes ſhall be permitted by this country for their advantage.* And the advice I give them is, that they ſhould give up theſe ideas, and lend their cordial aſſiſtance to ſuch meaſures as may bring about, in the ſhorteſt poſſible time, an abolition of a traffick, for which not one reaſon can be given, that is conſiſtent with policy, humanity, or juſtice.

MR. ADDINGTON, to explain—The Committee will do me the honour to recollect, that what I have ſtated in favour of gradual, rather than immediate abolition, was on the principle of ſecuring the property of individuals: I did not conceive that the preſent ſtate of the Weſt Indies would admit of our aboliſhing this trade immediately.

As to what the Right Honourable Gentleman has ſaid of giving a bounty on the importation of females, I mentioned certainly, that I thought a duty might be laid on imported negroes, which ſhould be lighter on the females, than on the males. I admit this muſt operate in effect as a bounty on the women imported. If a ſufficient ſupply of negroes can be raiſed the Iſlands, I wiſh no ſuch diſtinctions ſhould be made.

With reſpect to the means of carrying the regulations in the Weſt Indies into execution, which the Right Honourable Gentleman thinks is a very nice point; the mode that has occurred to me is, that an addreſs ſhould be preſented to His Majeſty, that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to direct certain regulations to be propoſed by the Governors of the Weſt India Iſlands.

I cannot help thinking that that moderation which has been recommended by my Right Honourable Friend, is the only way in which we can ſecure our object, or do ourſelves honour in the eyes of the world.

THE

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY DUNDAS—Conceiving that ſome miſconception may, perhaps, ariſe from my voting with my Honourable Friend, in his motion as it now ſtands, I riſe to move an amendment to it; which is to inſert the word, *gradually*, before the words, " to be aboliſhed." The motion will then be, " That the Slave Trade ought *gradually* to be aboliſhed."

Mr. JENKINSON.—I feel a conſiderable degree of regret, when I differ from thoſe with whom I am in the habit of acting; but I ſhould think I was acting inconſiſtently with that duty which I owe my CONSTITUENTS and my country, if after having formed a *decided opinion* on ſo *great and important a queſtion* as that which is now before the Houſe, any motives whatever ſhould prevent me from delivering that opinion, and from ſupporting it with ſuch arguments as may appear to me *deciſive* on the ſubject.

In riſing to oppoſe the propoſitions that have been made, I feel that I labour under every poſſible difficulty. I riſe not only to oppoſe a meaſure, generally believed to be popular, but which has been ſupported by a greater combination of abilities than was ever united on any one ſubject, on which a difference of opinion could reaſonably exiſt. Feeling, as I do, my own inability to contend with the Right Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt, all that I can do is, to call the attention of the Houſe, as briefly as poſſible, to what I conceive to be the real ſtate of the queſtion; and I hope that the Committee will be influenced in their deciſion, rather by the weight of argument, than by any ingenuity or eloquence with which it may be ſupported.

The opinions of thoſe who are adverſe to the abolition, have in general been unfairly ſtated. It has been circulated that their opinion is founded on principles of *policy*, as oppoſed to principles of *humanity*—on no ſuch ground am I diſpoſed to reſiſt the abolition. If it can be clearly made out that the intereſts of humanity are decidedly in favour of the propoſition, Heaven forbid that any motives of policy ſhould

ſhould prevent our adopting it! But if, on the contrary, it ſhould appear, that the Cauſe of Humanity is, *in fact, againſt the Abolition*, I truſt then that the very ſame principles which would in the one caſe have induced the Committee to adopt the propoſition, will then induce them to unite with me in oppoſing it.—I deſire, however, to be underſtood, when I ſay that the cauſe of *humanity* is againſt the Abolition. The queſtion is not, whether the trade was *originally founded* in *injuſtice* and *oppreſſion*. I admitted it was—The queſtion is not, whether the trade is *abſtractedly in itſelf an evil*. I admit it to be ſo—But whether, under all the circumſtances of the caſe, any conſiderable advantage would ariſe to a number of our fellow creatures, from the abolition of the trade taking place in the manner in which it has been propoſed.

The ſubject, from the manner in which it has been treated, naturally divided itſelf into three points of view.

1. The ſituation of the Negroes on the coaſt of Africa.
2. Their ſituation in the Middle Paſſage.
3. Their ſituation in the Weſt India iſlands; and how far, in each of theſe reſpective ſituations, their condition is likely to be benefited by the meaſure which has been propoſed.

Diſpoſed as I may be, not to agree to the ſtatement that has been made, of the ſituation of the Negroes in Africa, it is not my intention to reſt any argument on that ground. I am ready to admit that their ſituation is miſerable, that their miſeries are in a great meaſure occaſioned by the Slave Trade, and that if that trade was univerſally aboliſhed, very great benefit will conſequently accrue to the inhabitants of Africa. No perſon will, however, pretend to aſſert, that whatever may be the calamities ſuffered by the inhabitants of that continent, *thoſe calamities ariſe from the trade, as carried on by Great Britain only*. Other countries muſt, of courſe, occaſion as much of thoſe evils as we do; and if the abolition of the trade on our part ſhould prove only the *transfer* of it into the hands of thoſe countries, very little benefit could accrue to the Negroes from our humanity.

What, then, is the probability of our example being followed by thoſe countries who have a conſiderable ſhare in the trade? Five years have now elapſed ſince the diſpoſition of a conſiderable part of this country has manifeſted itſelf in favour

of

of the abolition. Sufficient time, then, has been given, to enable us to judge whether other countries are likely to ſecond our efforts.

Have the Portugueſe ſhewn any diſpoſition to follow our example? Far from it. Have the Dutch? I am very much miſinformed if there are not Agents from Holland at this very time in this country, who are negociating with perſons concerned in the trade, who are deſirous of giving all poſſible encouragement to them if we ſhould abandon it. Have the Spaniards? On the contrary, it will appear that they immediately took advantage of our diſpoſition, and gave every poſſible encouragement to the trade, by offering a bounty on the importation of Slaves. Have the French? They who have carried fanaticiſm, and their ideas of liberty, to an extent as yet unheard of—have they ſhewn any diſpoſition to imitate our conduct in this particular? The meaſure was certainly propoſed in the National Aſſembly, but was rejected; nay, not only rejected, but the bounty on the importation of Slaves, as an encouragement to the trade, has been continued at leaſt; I am not ſure whether it has not been expreſsly renewed.

I ſhould not have been ſurpriſed if ſome of theſe countries had thought it politic to pretend to have a ſimilar diſpoſition with ourſelves, and after having induced us to aboliſh the trade, they had availed themſelves of our diſpoſition to humanity. But when they have *not only ſhewn no diſpoſition to aboliſh*, but, on the contrary, *every diſpoſition* to *encourage* it, I have a right to infer, that the abolition of the trade, on our part, would be only the *transfer* of it into the hands of thoſe countries.

On great political queſtions, where important intereſts are involved, it would in general be thought ſufficient to be able to prove, that *no benefit is likely to ariſe* to thoſe to whom we are deſirous of affording relief; but if I can proceed further, if I can prove, not only that *no advantage*, but that a *great diſadvantage* will ariſe to the Negroes, from the meaſure that is propoſed; no doubt can then remain on the mind of any perſon who does not prefer *ſpeculative* to *practical humanity*, reſpecting the propriety of rejecting it.

The mortality on board the Engliſh ſhips trading from Africa was, previous to the Regulating Bill, *four and an eighth*

per cent. Since that, it has been reduced to a little more than *three per cent.** The mortality on board *French ſhips* trading from the ſame quarter is near *ten per cent.*—ſo that there is *a mortality of nearly ſeven per cent. more on board French, than on board Engliſh ſhips.* The mortality in *Dutch ſhips* is from *five to ſeven per cent.* The mortality on board *Portugueſe ſhips* is leſs than either *French* or *Dutch* ſhips, but *more* than on *Engliſh* ſhips, ſince the regulating Bill.

Let us then conſider, what would be the conſequence of the abolition of the trade on our part. Do we regret the deaths, do we regret the cruelties that are ſaid to have been committed? *Thoſe deaths, and thoſe cruelties, would be more than doubled if we were to aboliſh the trade.*

Suppoſe the caſe, as it really ſtands, was to be ſubmitted to the Africans; ſuppoſe we were to conſult their inclinations on the ſubject, what do we believe would be their anſwer; miſerable as to them the trade might be; numerous as the calamities they ſuffer from it? "If other countries are not "diſpoſed to unite with you in aboliſhing it, for our ſakes "do you continue it; for whatever may be the evils we "ſuffer from it, the trade carried on by other countries, "when compared to the trade carried on by you, is as *evil* "when compared to *good.*"

I am ready to admit that there is one anſwer, which would probably be made to this.

Great Britain trades not only for her own iſlands, but in ſome degree for thoſe of other countries. No good, but on the contrary, evil, will be the conſequence, to thoſe Negroes which we carry into the Foreign Weſt India Iſlands. But as the trade between Africa and our Weſt India Iſlands will then be ſtopped, and, as conſequently a ſmaller number of Negroes will then be wanted, than thoſe which are demanded at preſent, ſome degree of good will accrue to the people of Africa from the abolition of the trade on our part.

In anſwer to this argument, I ſay, that as the Weſt India Planters purchaſe Negroes at preſent, notwithſtanding the

* The mortality was ſtated by Mr. Wilberforce to be by the documents of the laſt year between *ten and eleven* per cent. in the Engliſh ſhips, and previous to the Regulating Bill ſomething more than this. 22,600 is the number imported laſt year to *our own Iſlands*, in Britiſh ſhips, out of which rather more than 2,300 died on the paſſage.

greatneſs of their price, I have a right to infer, that they think it for their intereſt to purchaſe them, and that conſequently, even after the abolition of the trade on our part, they will not fail to purchaſe them. The point then to be conſidered is, What is the probability of their being able to ſmuggle ?

The Committee may, in a great meaſure, judge of this from the evidence already before them.

By the evidence, it appears, that a great number of Slaves have been *clandeſtinly ſtolen*, from time to time, out of *our iſlands*, and carried into the *Foreign Weſt India Iſlands*. It appears that *ſeveral hundreds were ſtolen, within a very ſhort period, from Jamaica, and carried into Cuba*. Theſe facts may ſurpriſe the Houſe, as it is clearly the intereſt of all the planters to prevent the ſmuggling, if poſſible. But if other countries are able to ſmuggle Slaves *out of the iſland, when it is the intereſt of every planter and overſeer to prevent that practice*—it follows, that there will be very little difficulty in ſmuggling Slaves *into the iſlands*, where it will be for the *intereſt of every planter and overſeer to promote it*. The conſequence then, of the abolition of the trade on our part, will be only the *transferring it into the hands of other nations*, who will carry it on at a much greater diſadvantage to the Africans, and who will *acquire the advantage and profit to themſelves of ſupplying our iſlands with Slaves*.

I will now call the attention of the Committee to the ſtate of the Negroes in the Weſt India Iſlands ; and much has been ſaid under this head, of the cruelties they ſuffer, and of the hard labour they are obliged to undergo. Tales of oppreſſion have been told, and narratives of ill uſage have been related, which muſt undoubtedly ſhock the feelings of all who heard them ; but is it fair to infer, from extraordinary inſtances, the general bad uſage of the Slaves ? Suppoſe that in the beſt cultivated government, a collection was to be made of the different abuſes and cruelties that had been committed for a ſeries of years ; ſuppoſe that in this country ſuch a collection had been made, and after the *brilliant panegyric that was made ſome time ago on our excellent Conſtitution*, ſome perſon had riſen up, and had ſtated theſe, as proofs that our Conſtitution was very different from what it had been deſcribed ; ſhould we have thought ourſelves juſtified in inferring

from a *certain number of extraordinary inſtances*, that we lived under a Government oppreſſive and tyrannical?—Should we not rather have anſwered, that in the moſt perfect ſyſtem which the human intellect is capable of forming, ſome weakneſſes, ſome defects muſt neceſſarily exiſt; and that it was unfair to draw inferences from extraordinary examples, to the prejudice of any ſyſtem whatever? I have a right to draw the ſame inference with reſpect to the ſtate of the Slaves in the Weſt India Iſlands, who, from being Slaves, were neceſſarily expoſed, to certain *peculiar* diſadvantages. I have a right to draw that inference, provided I can prove, that, notwithſtanding any particular exception, the general behaviour of the planters or overſeers towards the Slaves, cannot have been ſuch as the friends to the abolition have deſcribed it to be.

Evidence has certainly been adduced, on both ſides, and I ſhould not be afraid, if it were neceſſary, to oppoſe the evidence of thoſe who have appeared in favour of the planters, againſt any evidence which has been adduced on the other ſide. I ſhould not be afraid to oppoſe ſuch characters as Lord Rodney, Admiral Barrington, Admiral Hotham, Sir Joſhua Rowley, &c. againſt any authorities, however reſpectable, who may have come forward in favour of the abolition. But on no ſuch evidence is it my intention to reſt the argument; there are facts in ſupport of that evidence, which muſt leave it without doubt on the minds of the Committee.

Previous to the year 1730, the mortality, and conſequently the decreaſe of the Slaves, in the Weſt India Iſlands, was very conſiderable. From the year 1730, to the year 1755, the deaths were reduced to only *two and a half per cent.* more than the births. From the year 1755, *to the year* 1768, they were reduced to only *one and three-fourths* more than the births. From the year 1768, to the year 1788, they were reduced to only *one per cent.* This then, on the firſt view of the ſubject, muſt prove, that whatever may have been the ſituation of Slaves in former times, their condition has been gradually improved.

But if we conſider the peculiar diſadvantages under which they labour, if we conſider the ſmall proportion of females with reſpect to males, the *hurricanes*, and *famines* which have been the *conſequence of thoſe hurricanes, and which have*

ſwept

ſwept away, in a ſhort period, thouſands of lives; if we conſider thus, that every natural obſtacle ſeems to combine to prevent the increaſe of the Slaves, I muſt judge it *phyſically impoſſible that they ſhould have increaſed in the manner, and to the degree to which they have increaſed, if the cruel treatment they have ſuffered, and the hard labour impoſed upon them, had been ſuch as the friends of the abolition have repreſented.*

This ſtatement not only enables me to juſtify the Weſt India Planters, from the aſperſions that have been thrown out againſt them, but enables me likewiſe to draw ſtill more important concluſions;—That as the Slaves in the Weſt India Iſlands have under the preſent ſtate of things, gradually increaſed, they will continue to increaſe.—That very few years will paſs, not only before the *births are equal to the deaths*, but before they are *more numerous than the deaths*—That if this is likely to happen under the *preſent* ſtate of things, *à fortiori*, it will follow that it muſt take place, if, by *certain regulations, the increaſe of the imported Slaves can be encouraged.*

The only doubt therefore which can remain on the minds of Gentlemen, is, whether it is more for the intereſt of the planter to *import*, or *breed*; for if I ſhall be able to prove, that it is more for the intereſt of the planter to breed, it will then follow, that the moment the ſtock of Slaves in the iſlands is believed by the planters to be ſufficient, that moment the further importation muſt neceſſarily ceaſe.

In the firſt place, the gradual increaſe of the Slaves, of late years, clearly proves that the increaſe has been encouraged by the planter, who conſequently muſt have conceived it to have been his *intereſt to breed.* But I mean not to reſt the argument on that ground. The price of Slaves was of late years become ſo great (nearly, I believe I may ſay, *twice as great*, as they were twenty years ago), that the planter, on the grounds of œconomy, muſt feel it his intereſt not to purchaſe, if by any poſſible means he can avoid it.

Let us conſider, then, that the greateſt mortality is on the newly-imported Slaves—That the diſeaſes they bring with them from Africa—the diſeaſes they are likely to contract on the paſſage, the operations they have been ſaid to undergo in the ſeaſoning, all prove the conſiderable riſk there muſt be in the purchaſe of Slaves, and that the planter is not only

put to a conſiderable expence, but is put to that expence, with a chance of very ſpeedily loſing the fruits of it.

To theſe conſiderations others may be added, no leſs important.—*Slaves bred in the iſlands are much more attached to the ſpot*—They have been gradually accuſtomed to the labour, and muſt conſequently feel leſs objection to the performance of it. Trained up likewiſe in regular ſubordination, they muſt of courſe be much more manageable than thoſe who are firſt put under the care of an overſeer at a more advanced period of their life. Slaves, on the other hand, who have been convicted of crimes, may conſequently be ſuch as no perſon would be deſirous of employing, if he could poſſibly avoid it. Let it be added to all theſe circumſtances, that children are of the greateſt ſervice in many parts of the labour, ſo that whilſt the planter muſt be convinced, that they will be the moſt valuable Slaves, when arrived at the age of maturity, he receives very conſiderable advantage from them, even in their earlieſt years. It having then been proved, that the *intereſt of the planter is to breed, rather than to import*, it muſt follow, that the planters would be little leſs than mad, to purchaſe Slaves, if they were not convinced that a further ſupply is neceſſary.

But it has been ſaid, that the births and the deaths in the iſlands are equal, and that conſequently no further ſupply is wanted. I am ready to admit, that the births and the deaths are nearly equal, but the queſtion muſt ſtill come to this: Is the ſtock of ſlaves in the iſlands ſufficient? Suppoſe that in the iſland of Jamaica there are 250,000 *Slaves*, and ſuppoſe, which I rather doubt, that number ſufficient for the cultivation of the iſland; I yet venture to aſſert, if the further importation is to be ſtopped, that the number of Slaves in the iſland is not ſufficient: for Gentlemen ſeem to have forgot, that perſons in that climate are ſubject to diſeaſes, of which we are ignorant, and which ſweep away *hundreds*, nay *ſometimes thouſands at a time*. They ſeem to have forgot, that they are ſubject to *hurricanes and famines*, which have the ſame dreadful effects.

Whatever number of Slaves may be neceſſary for the cultivation of the iſlands, if further importation is to be ſtopped, an extra number will be neceſſary, in order that, in caſe of any

any extraordinary mortality, from the circumſtances already ſtated, the complete ruin of the planter may be prevented.

That the time will come, when the ſtock of Slaves in the iſlands will be ſufficient, no perſon, who has attended to the former part of this argument can doubt. That the Slaves have gradually increaſed, are gradually increaſing, and that by certain regulations the increaſe may be conſiderably promoted, muſt be equally obvious. But theſe are all conſiderations, which ſhould induce us to oppoſe the Abolition, becauſe the event, without any of the evils that may ariſe from the immediate adoption of that meaſure, muſt, in the natural order which I have deſcribed, take place in the courſe of a very ſhort period.

I wiſh the Committee to conſider, what miſchiefs may ariſe from the planters being able to ſmuggle. How dangerous it may be, that they ſhould depend on other nations, and not on us, for their ſupply of Slaves—That from entering into bargains and contracts, perhaps even with our enemies, their diſpoſitions may be alienated from us, *that the loſs of the iſlands themſelves may be the conſequence; and not only the loſs of ſo much revenue, and ſo much power to ourſelves, but the acquiſition of that power, and that revenue by our enemies*—And why ſhould we expoſe ourſelves to ſuch a riſk, for any benefit which will reſult to the Negroes? On the contrary, *it has been proved* that *it would be a diſadvantage to them.*

Let it likewiſe be conſidered, that we may deprive ourſelves by theſe means of the power of enforcing regulations, and that thus the trade may go on as it does at preſent, with a much leſs rapid increaſe of the Slaves by birth. This is, however, not the only riſk to which we are expoſing our Colonies. Let *us reflect on the calamities of St. Domingo*, which have been imputed by the deputies from that iſland, to the *advocates of abolition.* What horror can be deſcribed, what ravage can be painted, what cruelty can be committed, which thoſe unfortunate beings have not ſuffered? And ſhall we, when principles of the ſame ſort are lurking in our own iſlands, ſhall we expoſe our fellow ſubjects to the ſame calamities, who, *if guilty of promoting this trade, have at leaſt been encouraged by ourſelves*, by Us, who, though *parties in the guilt, would in no adequate degree be parties in the ſuffering?*

It has been ſaid, that there is a diſtinction between the *Abolition* of the Slave Trade, and the *Emancipation* of the Slaves. I admit that diſtinction; but ſhould we be ſurpriſed if the Slaves, who, receiving no immediate benefit from the abolition of the trade, ſhould complain that theſe principles are not equally applied to themſelves;—ſhould we be ſurpriſed if their minds, not cultivated as our own, ſhould not feel ſo *nice a diſtinction*, or at leaſt, if they do feel it, would be too much intereſted to appear to do ſo?

That the Slave Trade is in itſelf an evil, I am ready to admit. That the ſtate of ſlavery itſelf is likewiſe an evil I am no leſs ready to admit. That if the queſtion was, *not to aboliſh*, but *eſtabliſh* them, I, of all thoſe who profeſs ſo much zeal for the intereſts of humanity, would not be the leaſt eager to oppoſe it; but, are there not many evils in this world which we ſhould have thought it our duty to prevent, yet which, when once they have taken place, it is more dangerous to oppoſe than to ſubmit to? *The duty of a Stateſman is, not to conſider abſtractedly what is right or wrong, but to weigh the diſadvantages that are likely to ariſe from the abolition of an evil, againſt the conſequences that are likely to ariſe from the continuance of it.*

On this ground let us judge of the preſent queſtion. Here is an evil, which, it has been proved, can be but of *ſhort continuance*; the continuance of which, by *proper regulations, may be extremely ſhortened.* The expiration of which, inſtead of being productive of good, will be productive of *eſſential harm* to thoſe whom it is meant to benefit; and ſhall we appearing to prevent the ſhort continuance of this evil, adopt a meaſure which can be of *no advantage on one hand, and which threatens every calamity on the other*—which threatens a diminution of our revenue, and conſequently a ſerious misfortune to the people of this country—which threatens the ruin of the property of thoſe perſons who, under *our encouragement*, have ſettled in the Weſt India Iſlands—which threatens *murder*, and *all thoſe cruelties* which, by the adoption of the meaſure, we are deſirous of preventing.

I have frequently rejoiced at the idea; that ſome of thoſe evils which have exiſted in all ages, and under all governments, are likely, in the preſent period, to be aboliſhed; that we live in an age where knowledge has become more

univerſal

univerſal than in any former period, and that, under the mild influence of true religion and philoſophy, ſociety is likely to receive conſiderable improvements. But I have always dreaded that thoſe *improvements ſhould be too rapid*—convinced that by this means their very end may be prevented. Violent changes ſhake the frame inſtead of ſupporting it. They endanger its exiſtence; and if the conſtitution out-lives the ſhock, it is reſtored weak and enfeebled. Gradual changes ſtrengthen and uphold it. The *conſequence* of the change, and not the *change*, is felt. Every ſtep ſecures the preceding, and becomes the foundation for additional improvement.

Agreeing, then, moſt perfectly with the friends to the abolition in *their end*, I differ from them only in the *means of accompliſhing that end*. I am deſirous of doing that gradually, which they are deſirous of doing raſhly.

To ſome part of the Right Honourable Gentleman's propoſitions I agree, but I as much differ from him in others.

I have drawn up two propoſitions, which meet my ideas on the ſubject, and which, if the Committee will give me leave, I will ſtate to them.

That an addreſs be preſented to his Majeſty, that he would be pleaſed to recommend to the Colonial Aſſemblies, to grant premiums to ſuch Planters and Overſeers as ſhall diſtinguiſh themſelves by promoting the annual increaſe of the Slaves *by birth*. And likewiſe to grant freedom to every female Negro, who has born and reared up five children to the age of ſeven years.

2d. That a bounty of 5l. per head be given to the maſter of every veſſel employed in the trade from the coaſt of Africa, who ſhall import in any cargo, a greater number of female than male Negroes, not exceeding the age of twenty-five years.

In order that I may be enabled to bring forward my propoſitions in form, I move that the Chairman ſhould leave the Chair.

Mr. ESTE.—I ſhould not intrude myſelf on the Committee at ſo late an hour, but with a view of inducing them to adjourn the debate. There are two propoſitions, Sir, before the Houſe. The one, for the Abolition of the Slave Trade

at

at large; the other for its gradual Abolition; and I cannot help thinking that Gentlemen ſhould be allowed a further time to compare their reſpective merits, and conſider of the beſt means of carrying their purpoſe.

I am perſuaded there are ſeveral enormities in the Slave Trade which call for regulation; which I alſo conceive to be the beſt means to effectuate the final Abolition of the Slave Trade: for it appears to me that a gradual Abolition would anſwer all the purpoſes, and effectuate its end in a much better manner than could be done by any other means.

* * * * * * * * *

At four o'Clock Mr. William Smith roſe, but Mr. Pitt having riſen at the ſame time, Mr. Smith gave way to him.

The Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT. At this hour of the morning I am afraid, Sir, I am too much exhauſted to enter ſo fully into the ſubject before the Committee as I could wiſh; but if my bodily ſtrength is in any degree equal to the taſk, I feel ſo ſtrongly the magnitude of this queſtion, that I am extremely earneſt to deliver my ſentiments, which I riſe to do with the more ſatisfaction, becauſe I now look forward to the iſſue of this buſineſs with conſiderable hopes of ſucceſs.

The debate has this day taken a turn, which, though it has produced a variety of new ſuggeſtions, has, upon the whole, contracted this queſtion into a much narrower point than it was ever brought into before.

I cannot ſay that I quite agree with the Right Honourable Gentleman over the way (Mr. Fox); I am far from deploring all that has been ſaid by my two Honourable Friends (Mr. DUNDAS and the Speaker.) I rather rejoice that they have now brought this ſubject to a fair iſſue—that ſomething, at leaſt, is already gained, and that the queſtion has taken altogether a new courſe this night. It is true, a difference of opinion has been ſtated, and has been urged with all the force

force of argument that could be given to it. But give me leave to ſay, that this difference has been urged upon principles very far removed from thoſe which were maintained by the opponents of my Honourable Friend when he firſt brought forward his motion. There are very few of thoſe who have ſpoken this night, who have not thought it their duty to declare their full and entire concurrence with my Honourable Friend in promoting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, *as their ultimate object.* However we may differ as to the time and manner of it, *we are agreed in the Abolition itſelf*; and my Honourable Friends have expreſſed their agreement in this ſentiment with that ſenſibility upon the ſubject, which humanity does moſt undoubtedly require. I do not, however, think they yet perceive what are the neceſſary conſequences of their own conceſſion, or follow up their own principles to their juſt concluſion.

The point now in diſpute between us, is, a difference *merely as to the period of time*, at which the Abolition of the Slave Trade ought to take place. I therefore congratulate this Houſe, the Country, and the World, that this great point is gained; that we may now conſider this trade as *having received its condemnation*; that *its ſentence is ſealed*; that this *Curſe of mankind* is ſeen by the Houſe in its true light; and that the greateſt ſtigma on our national character which ever yet exiſted, is about to be removed! And, Sir, (which is ſtill more important) *that* MANKIND, I truſt, *in general, are now likely to be delivered from the greateſt practical evil that ever has afflicted the human race—from the ſevereſt and moſt extenſive calamity recorded in the Hiſtory of the world!*

In proceeding to give my reaſons for concurring with my Honourable Friend in his motion, I ſhall neceſſarily advert to thoſe topics which my Honourable Friends near me have touched upon; and which they ſtated to be their motives for preferring a gradual, and in ſome degree, a diſtant Abolition of the Slave Trade, to the more immediate and direct meaſure now propoſed to you. Beginning as I do, with declaring that in this reſpect I differ completely from my Right Honourable Friends near me, I do not, however, mean to ſay, that I differ as to one obſervation which has been preſſed rather ſtrongly by them. If they can ſhew

that

that *their* propoſition of a *gradual* Abolition, is more likely than *ours* to ſecure the object which we have in view—that by proceeding gradually we ſhall arrive *more ſpeedily* at our end, and attain it with *more certainty*, than by a *direct* vote *immediately* to aboliſh:—If they can ſhew to the ſatisfaction both of myſelf and the Committee, that our propoſition has more the *appearance* of a ſpeedy Abolition, than the *reality* of it; undoubtedly they will in this caſe make a convert of me, and my Honourable Friend who moved the queſtion; they will make a convert of every man among us, who looks to this, which I truſt we all do, as a queſtion not to be determined by theoretical principles or enthuſiaſtic feelings, but conſiders the practicability of the meaſure—aiming ſimply to effect his object in the ſhorteſt time, and in the ſureſt poſſible manner.

If, however, I ſhall be able to ſhew that *our* meaſure proceeds *more directly* to its object, and ſecures it with *more certainty*, and within a *leſs diſtant period*; and that the Slave Trade will on our plan be aboliſhed ſooner than on his; may I not then hope, that my Right Honourable Friends will be as ready to adopt our propoſition, as we ſhould in the other caſe be willing to accede to theirs?

One of my Right Honourable Friends has ſtated, that an Act paſſed here for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, would not *ſecure* its Abolition. Now, Sir, I ſhould be glad to know, why an Act of the Britiſh Legiſlature, enforced by all thoſe ſanctions which we have undoubtedly the power and the right to apply, is not to be effectual; at leaſt as to every material purpoſe? Will not the executive power have the ſame appointment of the officers and the courts of judicature, by which all the cauſes relating to this ſubject muſt be tried, that it has in other caſes? Will there not be the ſame ſyſtem of law by which we now maintain a monopoly of commerce? If the ſame law, Sir, be applied to the prohibition of the *Slave Trade*, which is applied in the caſe of *other contraband commerce*, with all the ſame means of the country to back it, I am at a loſs to know why the actual and total Abolition is not as likely to be effected in this way, as by any plan or project of my Honourable Friends, for bringing about a gradual termination of it. But my obſervation is extremely fortified by what fell from my Honourable Friend who ſpoke laſt: he has told you,

Sir,

Sir, that if you will have patience with it for a few years, the Slave Trade muſt drop of itſelf, from the increaſing dearneſs of the *commodity* imported, and the increaſing progreſs, on the other hand, of internal population. Is it true, then, that the importations are ſo expenſive and diſadvantageous already, that the internal population is even now becoming a cheaper reſource? I aſk then, if you leave to the importer no means of importation *but by ſmuggling*, and if, *beſides all the preſent diſadvantages*, you load him with all the charges and hazards of the ſmuggler, by taking care that the laws againſt ſmuggling are in this caſe watchfully and rigorouſly enforced, is there any danger of any conſiderable ſupply of freſh Slaves being poured into the iſlands through this channel? And is there any real ground of fear, becauſe a few Slaves may have been ſmuggled in or out of the iſlands, that a bill will be uſeleſs and ineffectual on any ſuch ground? The queſtion under theſe circumſtances will not bear a diſpute.

Perhaps, however, my Honourable Friends may take up another ground, and ſay, "It is true your meaſure would ſhut "out further importations more immediately; but *we* do not "*mean* to ſhut them out immediately. We think it right, on "grounds of *general Expediency*, that they ſhould not be im-"mediately ſhut out." Let us therefore now come to this queſtion of the *Expediency* of making the Abolition diſtant and gradual, rather than immediate.

The argument of expediency in my opinion (like every other argument in this diſquiſition) will not juſtify the continuance of the Slave Trade for one unneceſſary hour. Supposing it to be in our power (which I have ſhewn it is) to enforce the prohibition from this preſent time, the expediency of doing it is to me ſo clear, that if I went on this principle alone I ſhould not feel a moment's heſitation. What is the argument of expediency ſtated on the other ſide? It is doubted whether the deaths and births in the iſlands are as yet ſo nearly equal as to enſure the keeping up a ſufficient ſtock of labourers: in anſwer to this I took the liberty of mentioning in a former year, what appeared to me to be the ſtate of population at that time. My obſervations were taken from documents which we have reaſon to judge authentic, and which carried on the face of them the concluſions I then ſtated: they were the clear, ſimple, and obvious reſult of a careful exa-

mination

mination which I made into this ſubject, and any Gentleman who will take the ſame pains may arrive at the ſame degree of ſatisfaction.

Theſe calculations, however, applied to a period of time that is now *four or five years paſt*. The births were then, in the general view of them, nearly equal to the deaths; and, as the ſtate of population was ſhewn, by a conſiderable retroſpect, to be regularly increaſing, an exceſs of births muſt before this time have taken place.

Another obſervation has been made as to the diſproportion of the ſexes: this, however, is a diſparity which exiſted in any material degree only in former years; it is a diſparity of which the Slave Trade has been itſelf the cauſe; which will gradually diminiſh as the Slave Trade diminiſhes, and muſt entirely ceaſe, if the Trade ſhall be aboliſhed; but which, nevertheleſs, is made the very plea for its continuance. I believe this diſproportion of the ſexes, taking the *whole* number in the iſlands, Creole as well as imported Africans, the latter of whom occaſion all the diſproportion, is not now by any means conſiderable.

But, Sir, I alſo ſhewed, that the great mortality, which turned the balance ſo as to make the deaths appear more numerous than the births, aroſe too from the imported Africans, who die in extraordinary numbers in the ſeaſoning. If, therefore, the importation of Negroes ſhould ceaſe, *every one* of the cauſes of mortality, which I have now ſtated, would ceaſe alſo. Nor can I conceive any reaſon why the preſent number of labourers ſhould not maintain itſelf in the Weſt Indies, except it be from ſome artificial cauſe, ſome fault in the iſlands; ſuch as the impolicy of their governors, or the cruelty of the managers and officers, whom they employ.

I will not re-iterate all that I ſaid at that time, or go through iſland by iſland. It is true, there is a difference in the ceded iſlands; and I ſtate them poſſibly to be, in ſome reſpects, an excepted caſe. But, if we are to enter into the ſubject of the mortality in *clearing new lands*; this, Sir, is undoubtedly another queſtion: the mortality here is tenfold; and this is to be conſidered, not as the *carrying on* a trade, but as the *ſetting on foot* a Slave Trade for the purpoſe of peopling the Colony; a meaſure which I think will not now be maintained. I therefore deſire Gentlemen to tell me fairly, whether the

period

period they look to is not *now arrived?* Whether, at this hour, the Weſt Indies may not be declared to have actually attained a ſtate in which they can maintain their population? and upon the anſwer I muſt neceſſarily receive, I think I could ſafely reſt the whole of the queſtion.

One Honourable Gentleman has rather ingeniouſly obſerved that one or other of theſe two aſſertions of ours, muſt neceſſarily be falſe: that either the population muſt be decreaſing, which we deny; or, if the population is increaſing, that the Slaves muſt be perfectly well treated, (this being the cauſe of ſuch population) which we deny alſo. That the population is rather increaſing than otherwiſe; and alſo that the general treatment is by no means ſo good as it ought to be, are both points which have been ſeparately proved by different evidences; nor are theſe two points ſo entirely incompatible. The ill treatment muſt be very great indeed, in order to diminiſh materially the population of any race of people. That it is not ſo extremely great as to do this, I will admit. I will even admit, if you pleaſe, that this charge may poſſibly have been ſometimes exaggerated; and I certainly think, that it applies leſs and leſs as we come nearer to the preſent times.

But, let us ſee how this contradiction of ours, as it is thought, really ſtands, and how the explanation of it will completely ſettle our minds, on the point in queſtion. Do the Slaves *diminiſh in numbers?* It can be nothing but *ill treatment* that cauſes the diminution. This ill treatment the Abolition muſt and will reſtrain. In this caſe, therefore, we ought to vote for the Abolition. On the other hand, Do you chuſe to ſay that the Slaves clearly *increaſe in numbers?* Then you want no importations, and, in this caſe alſo, you may ſafely vote for the Abolition. Or, if you chuſe to ſay, as the third and only other caſe which can be put, and which perhaps is the neareſt to the truth, that the population is *nearly ſtationary*, and the treatment *neither ſo bad nor ſo good* as it might be; then ſurely, Sir, it will not be denied, that this of all others, is on *each* of the two grounds, the proper period for ſtopping further ſupplies: for your population, which you own is already ſtationary, will thus be made undoubtedly to increaſe from the births; and the good treatment of your preſent Slaves, which I am now ſuppoſing is but very moderate, will be neceſſarily improved alſo by the ſame meaſure of Abolition. I ſay, therefore

therefore, that theſe propoſitions, contradictory as they may be repreſented, are in truth not at all inconſiſtent, but even come in aid of each other, and lead to a concluſion that is deciſive. And let it be always remembered, that in this branch of my argument, I have only in view the well-being of the Weſt Indies, and do not now ground any thing on the African part of the queſtion.

But, Sir, I may carry theſe obſervations reſpecting the iſlands much further. It is within the power of the Coloniſts, (and is it not then their indiſpenſable duty?) to apply themſelves to the correction of thoſe various abuſes, by which population is reſtrained. The moſt important conſequences may be expected to attend Colonial regulations for this purpoſe. With the improvement of internal population, the *condition* of every Negro will improve alſo; his liberty will advance, or at leaſt he will be *approaching* to a ſtate of liberty. Nor can you increaſe the happineſs, or extend the freedom of the Negro, without adding in an equal degree to the *ſafety of the iſlands*, and of all their inhabitants. Thus, Sir, in the place of *Slaves*, who naturally have an intereſt directly oppoſite to that of their maſters, and are therefore viewed by them with an eye of conſtant ſuſpicion, you will create a body of valuable *citizens and ſubjects*, forming a part of the ſame community, having a common intereſt with their ſuperiors, in the ſecurity and proſperity of the whole.

And, here let me add, that in proportion as you increaſe the happineſs of theſe unfortunate beings, you will undoubtedly increaſe in effect the *quantity of their labour alſo*. Gentlemen, talk of the *diminution* of the labour of the iſlands! I will venture to aſſert, that, even if in conſequence of the Abolition there were to be ſome decreaſe in the number of hands, the quantity of work done, *ſuppoſing the condition of the Slaves to improve*, would by no means diminiſh in the ſame proportion; perhaps would be far from diminiſhing at all. For if you reſtore to this degraded race the true feelings of men; if you take them out from among the order of brutes, and place them on a level with the reſt of the human ſpecies; they will then work with that energy which is natural to men, and their labour will be productive, in a thouſand ways, above what it has yet been; as the labour of a man is always more productive than that of a mere brute.

It

It generally happens that in every bad cauſe ſome information ariſes out of the evidence of its defenders themſelves, which ſerves to expoſe in one part or other the weakneſs of their defence. It is the characteriſtic of ſuch a cauſe, that if it be at all gone into, even by its own ſupporters, it is liable to be ruined by the contradictions in which thoſe who maintain it are for ever involved.

The Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain ſent over certain queries to the Weſt India iſlands, with a view of elucidating the preſent ſubject; and they particularly inquired, whether the Negroes had any days or hours allotted to them, in which they might work for themſelves. The Aſſemblies in their anſwers, with an air of great ſatisfaction ſtate the labour of the Slaves to be moderate, and the Weſt India ſyſtem to be well calculated to promote the domeſtic happineſs of the Slaves: They add, "that proprietors are not "compelled by law to allow their Slaves any part of the ſix "working days of the week for themſelves, but that it is the "general practice to allow them one afternoon in every week "out of crop time, which, with ſuch hours as they chuſe to "work on Sundays, is time amply ſufficient for their own purpoſes:" Now, therefore, *will* the Negroes, or I may rather ſay, *do* the Negroes *work for their own emolument?* I beg the Committee's attention to this point: The Aſſembly of Grenada proceeds to ſtate.—I have their own words for it—"*That though the Negroes are allowed the afternoons of only* "*one day in every week, they will do as much work in that af-* "*ternoon, when employed for their own benefit, as in the whole* "*day when employed in their maſters ſervice.*"

Now, Sir, I will deſire you to burn all my calculations; to diſbelieve, if you pleaſe, every word I have ſaid on the preſent ſtate of population; nay, I will admit, for the ſake of argument, that the numbers are decreaſing, and the productive labour at preſent inſufficient for the cultivation of thoſe countries: And I will then aſk, whether the increaſe in the quantity of labour which is reaſonably to be expected from the improved condition of the Slaves, is not by the admiſſion of the iſlands themſelves, by their admiſſion not merely of an argument but a fact, far more than ſufficient to counterbalance any decreaſe which can be rationally apprehended from a defective ſtate of their population? Why, Sir, a Negro if

he works for *himſelf*, and not for a maſter, will do double work! This is their own account. If you will believe the planters, if you will believe the legiſlature of the iſlands, the productive labour of the colonies would, in caſe the Negroes worked as free labourers inſtead of Slaves, *be literally doubled. Half* the preſent labourers on this ſuppoſition would ſuffice, for the *whole* cultivation of our iſlands on the preſent ſcale. I therefore, confidently aſk the Houſe, whether in conſidering the whole of this queſtion, we may not fairly look forward to an improvement in the condition of theſe unhappy and degraded beings; not only as an event deſirable on the ground of humanity and political prudence; but alſo as a means of increaſing, very conſiderably indeed, (even without any increaſing population,) the productive induſtry of the Iſlands?

When Gentlemen are ſo nicely balancing the paſt and future means of cultivating the plantations, let me requeſt them to put this argument into the ſcale; and the more they conſider it, the more will they be ſatisfied, that both the ſolidity of the principle which I have ſtated, and the fact which I have juſt quoted, in the very words of the Colonial Legiſlature, will bear me out in every inference I have drawn. I think they will perceive alſo, that it is the undeniable duty of this Houſe, on the grounds of true policy, immediately to ſanction and carry into effect that ſyſtem which enſures theſe important advantages; in addition to all thoſe other ineſtimable bleſſings which follow in their train.

If, therefore, the argument of expediency as applying to the Weſt India Iſlands, is the teſt by which this queſtion is to be tried; I truſt I have now eſtabliſhed this propoſition, namely, that whatever tends moſt ſpeedily and effectually to meliorate the condition of the Slaves, is, undoubtedly on the ground of expediency, leaving juſtice out of the queſtion, the main object to be purſued.

That the immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade will moſt eminently have this effect, and that it is the only meaſure from which this effect can in any conſiderable degree be expected, are points to which I ſhall preſently come; but before I enter upon them, let me notice one or two further circumſtances.

We

We are told (and by reſpectable and well-informed perſons) that the purchaſe of new negroes has been injurious inſtead of profitable to the planters themſelves; ſo large a proportion of theſe unhappy wretches being found to periſh in the ſeaſoning. Writers well verſed in this ſubject have even adviſed that, in order to remove the *temptation* which the Slave Trade offers to expend large ſums in this injudicious way, *the door of importation ſhould be ſhut*.—This very plan which we now propoſe, the miſchief of which is repreſented to be ſo great as to outweigh ſo many other momentous conſiderations has actually been recommended by ſome of the beſt authorities, as a plan highly requiſite to be adopted on the very principle of advantage to the Iſlands; nay, not merely on that principle of general and political advantage on which I have already touched, but for the advantage of the very individuals who would otherwiſe be moſt forward in purchaſing Slaves. On the part of the Weſt Indians it is urged, "The Planters are in debt: They are already diſtreſſed; "if you ſtop the Slave Trade, they will be ruined." Mr. Long, the celebrated hiſtorian of Jamaica, recommends the ſtopping of importations, as a receipt for enabling the plantations which are embaraſſed *to get out of debt*. I will quote his words. Speaking of the uſurious terms on which money is often borrowed for the purchaſe of freſh Slaves, he adviſes "the "laying a duty *equal to a prohibition* on all negroes imported "for the ſpace of four or five years, except for re-exportation." "Such a law," he proceeds to ſay, "would be attended with the following good conſequences. It would "put an immediate ſtop to theſe extortions; it would enable the planter to retrieve his affairs by *preventing him* "*from running in debt*, either by renting or purchaſing of negroes; it would render ſuch recruits leſs neceſſary, *by the* "*redoubled care he would be obliged to take of his preſent ſtock*, "*the preſervation of their lives and health*: And laſtly, it "would raiſe the value of negroes in the iſland.—A NORTH "AMERICAN PROVINCE, BY THIS PROHIBITION ALONE "FOR A FEW YEARS, FROM BEING DEEPLY PLUNGED "IN DEBT, HAS BECOME INDEPENDENT, RICH, AND "FLOURISHING."

On this authority of Mr. Long I reſt the queſtion, whether the prohibition of further importations is that raſh, impolitic,

and completely ruinous meaſure, which it is ſo confidently declared to be with reſpect to our Weſt Indian Plantations.

I do not however mean in thus treating this branch of the ſubject, abſolutely to exclude the queſtion of indemnification on the ſuppoſition of *poſſible diſadvantages* affecting the Weſt Indies through the Abolition of the Slave Trade. But when Gentlemen ſet up a claim of compenſation merely on thoſe *general allegations*, which are all that I have yet heard from them, I can only anſwer, *let them produce their caſe* in a diſtinct and ſpecific form; and if upon any practicable or reaſonable grounds it ſhall claim conſideration, it will then be time enough for Parliament to decide upon it.

I now come to another circumſtance of great weight, connected with this part of the queſtion. I mean the danger to which the Iſlands are expoſed from thoſe negroes who are newly imported. This, Sir, like the obſervation which I lately made, is no mere ſpeculation of ours; for here again I refer you to Mr. Long, the Hiſtorian of Jamaica. He treats particularly of the dangers to be dreaded from the introduction of Coromantine negroes; an appellation under which are compriſed ſeveral deſcriptions of Negroes obtained on the Gold Coaſt, whoſe native country is not exactly known, and who are purchaſed in a variety of markets, having been brought from ſome diſtance inland. With a view of preventing inſurrections, he adviſes, that "by laying a duty "equal to a prohibition, no more of theſe Coromantines "ſhould be bought;" and after noticing one Inſurrection which happened through their means, he tells you of another in the following year, in which thirty-three Coromantines, "*moſt of whom had been newly imported*, ſuddenly roſe and in "the ſpace of an hour murdered and wounded no leſs than "nineteen white perſons."

To the authority of Mr. Long, both in this and other parts of his work, I may add the recorded opinion of the Committee of the Houſe of Aſſembly of Jamaica itſelf; who, in conſequence of a rebellion among the Slaves, were appointed to inquire into the beſt means of preventing future Inſurrections. The Committee reported, "That the rebellion "had originated (like moſt or all others) with the Coro-"mantines; and they propoſed *that a bill ſhould be brought in*

"*for*

" *for laying a higher duty on the importation of theſe particular* " *Negroes*," which was intended to operate as a prohibition.

But the danger is not confined to the importation of Coromantines. Mr. Long, carefully inveſtigating as he does the cauſes of ſuch frequent Inſurrections, particularly at Jamaica, accounts for them from the greatneſs of it's *general* importations. " In two years and a half," ſays he, " 27,000 Ne- " groes have been imported."—" No wonder we have rebel- " lions! Twenty-ſeven thouſand in two years and a half?" Why, Sir, I believe that in ſome late years there have been as many imported into the ſame Iſland within the ſame period! Surely, Sir, when Gentlemen talk ſo vehemently of the *ſafety* of the Iſlands, and charge us with being ſo indifferent to it; when they ſpeak of the calamities of St. Domingo, and of ſimilar dangers impending over their own heads at the preſent hour, it ill becomes *them* to be the perſons who *are crying out for further importations*. It ill becomes *them* to charge upon *us* the crime of ſtirring up Inſurrections—upon us who are only adopting the very principles, which Mr. Long—which in part even the Legiſlature of Jamaica itſelf, laid down in the time of danger, with an avowed view to the prevention of any ſuch calamity.

The Houſe, I am ſure will eaſily believe it is no ſmall ſatisfaction to me, that among the many arguments for prohibiting the Slave Trade which crowd upon my mind; the ſecurity of our Weſt India poſſeſſions againſt internal commotions, as well as foreign enemies, is among the moſt prominent and moſt forcible. And here let me apply to my two Right Honourable Friends, and aſk them, whether in this part of the argument they do not ſee reaſon for *immediate* Abolition? Why ſhould you any longer import into thoſe countries that which is the *very ſeed* of Inſurrection and rebellion? Why ſhould you perſiſt in introducing thoſe latent principles of conflagration, which if they ſhould once burſt forth, may annihilate in a ſingle day the induſtry of an hundred years? Why will you ſubject yourſelves, with open eyes, to the evident and imminent riſk of a calamity, which may throw you back a whole century in your profits, in your cultivation, in your progreſs to the emancipation of your Slaves; and diſappointing at once every one of theſe golden expectations, may retard not only the accompliſhment of that happy ſyſtem

which I have attempted to deſcribe, but may cut off even your opportunity of taking any one introductory ſtep? Let us begin from this time! Let us not commit theſe important intereſts to any further hazard! Let us proſecute this great object from this very hour! Let us vote that the Abolition of the Slave Trade ſhall be *immediate*, and not left to I know not what future time or contingency! Will my Right Hon. Friends anſwer for the ſafety of the Iſlands during any imaginable intervening period? Or do they think that any little advantages of the kind which they ſtate, can have any weight in that *ſcale of expediency* in which this great queſtion ought undoubtedly to be tried.

Thus ſtated, and thus alone, Sir, can it be truly ſtated, to what does the whole of my Right Honourable Friend's arguments, on the head of expediency, amount? It amounts but to this:—The Colonies on the one hand would have to ſtruggle with ſome few difficulties and diſadvantages at the firſt, for the ſake of obtaining on the other hand immediate ſecurity to their leading intereſts; of enſuring, Sir! even their own political exiſtence; and for the ſake alſo of immediately commencing that ſyſtem of progreſſive improvement in the condition of the Slaves, which is neceſſary to raiſe them from the ſtate of brutes to that of rational beings, but which never can begin until the introduction of theſe new diſaffected and dangerous Africans into the ſame gangs, ſhall have been ſtopped.

If any argument can in the ſlighteſt degree juſtify the ſeverity that is now ſo generally practiſed in the treatment of the Slaves, it muſt be the introduction of theſe Africans. It is the introduction of theſe Africans that renders all idea of Emancipation for the preſent ſo chimerical; and the very mention of it ſo dreadful. It is the introduction of theſe Africans that keeps down the condition of all Plantation Negroes. Whatever ſyſtem of treatment is deemed neceſſary by the Planters to be adopted towards theſe new Africans, extends itſelf to the other Slaves alſo; inſtead therefore of deferring the hour when you will finally put an end to importations, vainly purpoſing that the condition of your preſent Slaves ſhould previouſly be mended, you muſt, in the very firſt inſtance, ſtop your importations, if you hope to introduce any rational

rational or practicable plan, either of gradual emancipation, or preſent general improvement.

Having now done with this queſtion of expediency as affecting the Iſlands, I come next to a propoſition advanced by my Right Honourable Friend, (Mr. Dundas,) which appeared to intimate, that on account of ſome *patrimonial rights* of the Weſt Indians, the prohibition of the Slave Trade might be conſidered as an invaſion of their legal inheritance.

Now, in anſwer to this propoſition, I muſt make two or three remarks, which I think my Right Honourable Friend will find ſome conſiderable difficulty in anſwering:

Firſt, I obſerve that his argument, if it be worth any thing, applies juſt as much to gradual as immediate Abolition. I have no doubt, that at whatever period he ſhould be diſpoſed to ſay, the Abolition ſhould actually take place, this defence will equally be ſet up; for it certainly is juſt as good an argument againſt an Abolition ſeven, or ſeventy years hence, as againſt an Abolition at this moment. It ſuppoſes, we have no right whatever to ſtop the importations; and even though the diſadvantage to our plantations, which ſome Gentlemen ſuppoſe to attend the meaſure of immediate Abolition, ſhould be admitted gradually to leſſen by the lapſe of a few years, yet in point of principle, the abſence of all right of interference would remain the ſame. My Right Honourable Friend, therefore, I am ſure will not preſs an argument not leſs hoſtile to his propoſition than to ours. But let us inveſtigate the foundation of this objection, and I will commence what I have to ſay, by putting a queſtion to my Right Honourable Friend. It is chiefly on the preſumed ground *of our being bound by a parliamentary ſanction heretofore given to the African Slave Trade*, that this argument againſt the Abolition is reſted. Does then my Right Honourable Friend, or does any man in this Houſe think, that the Slave Trade has received any ſuch parliamentary ſanction, as muſt place it more out of the juriſdiction of the legiſlature for ever after, than the other branches of our national commerce? I aſk, is there any one regulation of any part of our commerce, which, if this argument be valid, may not equally be objected to, on the ground of its affecting ſome man's patrimony, ſome man's property, or ſome man's expectations? Let it never be forgotten that the argument I am canvaſſing

would be juſt as ſtrong, if the poſſeſſion affected were ſmall, and the poſſeſſors humble; for on every principle of juſtice, the property of any ſingle individual, or ſmall number of individuals is as ſacred, as that of the great body of Weſt Indians. Juſtice ought to extend her protection with rigid impartiality to the rich and to the poor, to the powerful and to the humble. If this be the caſe, in what a ſituation does my Right Honourable Friend's argument place the legiſlature of Britain? What room is left for their interference in the regulation of any part of our commerce? It is ſcarcely poſſible to lay a duty on any one article, which may not when firſt impoſed, be ſaid in ſome way to affect the property of individuals, and even of ſome entire claſſes of the community. If the laws reſpecting the Slave Trade imply a contract for its perpetual continuance, I will venture to ſay, there does not paſs a year without ſome act, equally pledging the faith of parliament to the perpetuating of ſome other branch of commerce. In ſhort, I repeat my obſervation, that no new tax can be impoſed, much leſs can any *prohibitory* duty be ever laid on any branch of trade, that has before been regulated by parliament, if this principle be once admitted.

Before I refer to the acts of parliament by which the public faith is ſaid to be pledged; let me remark alſo, that a contract for the continuance of the Slave Trade, muſt on the principles which I ſhall preſently inſiſt on, have been void, even from the beginning; for if this trade is an outrage upon juſtice, and only another name for fraud, robbery and murder; will any man urge that the legiſlature could poſſibly by any pledge whatever incur the obligation of being an acceſſary, or I may even ſay, a principal in the commiſſion of ſuch enormities, by ſanctioning their continuance? as well might an individual think himſelf bound by a promiſe to commit an aſſaſſination. I am confident, Gentlemen muſt ſee, that our proceeding on ſuch grounds, would infringe all the principles of law, and ſubvert the very foundation of morality.

Let us now ſee, how far the acts themſelves ſhew that there is this ſort of parliamentary pledge to continue the African Slave Trade. The Act of 23. Geo. II. C. 31, is that by which we are ſuppoſed to be bound up by contract to ſanction all thoſe horrors now ſo incontrovertiby proved. How ſurpriſed then Sir, muſt the Houſe be to find, that by a clauſe of

their

their very act, ſome of theſe outrages are expreſsly forbidden! It ſays, "No commander, or maſter of a ſhip trading to "Africa, ſhall by fraud, force, or violence, or by any indi-"rect practice whatſoever, take on board or carry away from "the coaſt of Africa, any Negro, or Native of the ſaid "country, or commit any violence on the Natives, to the pre-"judice of the ſaid trade, and that every perſon ſo offending, "ſhall for every ſuch offence forfeit"—When it comes to the penalty, ſorry am I to ſay, that we ſee too cloſe a reſemblance to the Weſt India law, which inflicts the payment of 30l. as the puniſhment for murdering a negro. The price of blood in Africa is 100l. but even this penalty is enough to prove that the Act at leaſt does not ſanction, much leſs does it engage to perpetuate enormities; and the whole trade has now been demonſtrated to be a maſs, a ſyſtem of enormities; of enormities which incontrovertibly bid defiance not only to this clauſe, but to every regulation which our ingenuity can deviſe, and our power carry into effect. Nothing can accompliſh the object of this clauſe but an extinction of the trade itſelf.

But, Sir, let us ſee what was the motive for carrying on the trade at all? The preamble of the Act ſtates it, "Whereas "the trade to and from Africa *is very advantageous to Great* "*Britain, and neceſſary for the ſupplying the Plantations* and "Colonies thereunto belonging with a *ſufficient number* of "Negroes at reaſonable rates, and for *that purpoſe* the ſaid "trade ſhould be carried on," &c. —Here then we ſee what the Parliament had in view when it paſſed this act; and I have clearly ſhewn that not one of the occaſions on which it grounded its proceedings now exiſts. I may then plead, I think, the very act itſelf as an argument for the Abolition. If it is ſhewn, that inſtead of being "very advantageous," to Great Britain, this trade is the moſt deſtructive that can well be imagined to her intereſts; that it is the ruin of our ſeamen; that it ſtops the extenſion of our manufactures.—If it is proved in the ſecond place that it is not *now* neceſſary for the "ſupplying "our Plantations with Negroes;" if it is further eſtabliſhed that this traffick was from the very beginning contrary to the firſt principles of juſtice, and conſequently that a pledge for its continuance, had one been attempted to have been given, muſt have been completely and abſolutely void—where then

in

in this Act of Parliament is the contract to be found, by which Britain is bound, as ſhe is ſaid to be, never to liſten to her own true intereſts, and to the cries of the Natives of Africa? Is it not clear that all argument, founded on the ſuppoſed pledged faith of Parliament, makes againſt thoſe who employ it? I refer you to the principles which obtain in other caſes. Every Trade Act ſhews undoubtedly that the Legiſlature is uſed to pay a tender regard to all claſſes of the community. But if for the ſake of moral duty, of national honour, or even of great political advantage, it is thought right, by authority of Parliament, to alter any long eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, Parliament is competent to do it. The Legiſlature will undoubtedly be careful to ſubject individuals to as little inconvenience as poſſible; and if any peculiar hardſhip ſhould ariſe, that can be diſtinctly ſtated, and fairly pleaded, there will ever, I am ſure, be a liberal feeling towards them in the Legiſlature of this country, which is the guardian of all who live under its protection. On the preſent occaſion, the moſt powerful conſiderations call upon us to Aboliſh the Slave Trade; and if we refuſe to attend to them on the alleged ground of pledged faith and contract, we ſhall depart as widely from the practice of Parliament, as from the path of moral duty. If indeed there is any caſe of hardſhip, which comes within the proper cognizance of Parliament, and calls for the exerciſe of its liberality,—well! But ſuch a caſe muſt be reſerved for calm conſideration, as a matter diſtinct from the preſent queſtion.

I beg pardon for dwelling ſo long on the argument of expediency, and on the manner in which it affects the Weſt Indies. I have been carried away by my own feelings on ſome of theſe points into a greater length than I intended, eſpecially conſidering how fully the ſubject has been already argued. The reſult of all I have ſaid, is, that there exiſts no impediment, no obſtacle, no ſhadow of reaſonable objection on the ground of pledged faith, or even on that of national expediency, to the Abolition of this trade. On the contrary, all the arguments drawn from thoſe ſources plead for it, and they plead much more loudly, and much more ſtrongly in every part of the queſtion, for an immediate, than for a gradual Abolition.

But

But now, Sir, I come to Africa. That is the ground on which I reſt, and here it is that I ſay my Right Honourable Friends do not carry their principles to their full extent.—Why ought the Slave Trade to be abolished? BECAUSE IT IS INCURABLE INJUSTICE. How much ſtronger then is the argument for immediate, than gradual abolition! By allowing it to continue even for one hour, do not my Right Honourable Friends weaken—do not they deſert, their own argument of its injuſtice? If on the ground of injuſtice it ought to be abolished at laſt, why ought it not now? Why is injuſtice to be ſuffered to remain for a ſingle hour? From what I hear without doors, it is evident that there is a general conviction entertained of its being far from juſt, and from that very conviction of its injuſtice, ſome men have been led, I fear, to the ſuppoſition, that the Slave Trade never could have been permitted to begin, but from ſome ſtrong and irreſiſtible neceſſity; a neceſſity, however, which if it was fancied to exiſt at firſt, I have ſhewn cannot be thought by any man whatever to exiſt now. This plea of neceſſity, thus preſumed, and preſumed, as I ſuſpect, from the circumſtance of injuſtice itſelf, has cauſed a ſort of acquieſcence in the continuance of this evil. Men have been led to place it among the rank of thoſe *neceſſary evils*, which are ſuppoſed to be the lot of human creatures, and to be permitted to fall upon ſome countries or individuals, rather than upon others, by that Being, whoſe ways are inſcrutable to us, and whoſe diſpenſations, it is conceived, we ought not to look into. The origin of evil is indeed a ſubject beyond the reach of human underſtandings; and the permiſſion of it by the Supreme Being, is a ſubject into which it belongs not to us to inquire. But where the evil in queſtion is a moral evil which a man can ſcrutinize, and where that moral evil has its origin *with ourſelves*, let us not imagine that we can clear our conſciences by this general, not to ſay irreligious and impious way of laying aſide the queſtion. If we reflect at all on this ſubject, we muſt ſee that every neceſſary evil ſuppoſes that ſome other and *greater* evil would be incurred were it removed: I therefore deſire to aſk, what can be that greater evil, which can be ſtated to overbalance the one in queſtion?—*I know of no evil that ever has exiſted, nor can imagine any evil to exiſt, worſe than the tearing of* EIGHTY THOUSAND PERSONS *annually from their native land,*

land, by a combination of the moſt civilized nations, in the moſt enlightened quarter of the globe; but more eſpecially by that nation, which calls herſelf the moſt free and the moſt happy of them all. Even if theſe miſerable beings were proved guilty of every crime before you take them off, of which however not a ſingle proof is adduced, ought *we* to take upon ourſelves the office of executioners? And even if we condeſcend ſo far, ſtill can we be juſtified in taking them, unleſs we have clear proof that they are criminals?

But if we go much further,—if we ourſelves *tempt* them to ſell their fellow-creatures to us, we may reſt aſſured, that they will take care to provide by every method, by kidnapping, by village-breaking, by unjuſt wars, by iniquitous condemnations, by rendering Africa a ſcene of bloodſhed and miſery, a ſupply of victims increaſing in proportion to our demand.—Can we then heſitate in deciding whether the wars in Africa are their wars or ours? It was our arms in the River Cameroon put into the hands of the Trader, that furniſhed him with the means of puſhing his trade; and I have no more doubt that they are Britiſh arms, put into the hands of Africans, which promote univerſal war and deſolation, than I can doubt their having done ſo in that individual inſtance.

I have ſhewn how great is the enormity of this evil, even on the ſuppoſition that we take only convicts and priſoners of war. But take the ſubject in the other way; take it on the grounds ſtated by the Right Honourable Gentleman over the way; and how does it ſtand? Think of EIGHTY THOUSAND perſons carried away out of their country by *we know not what means*! For crimes imputed! For light or inconſiderable faults! For debt perhaps! For the crime of witchcraft! Or a thouſand other weak and ſcandalous pretexts! Beſides all the fraud and kidnapping, the villainies and perfidy, by which the Slave Trade is ſupplied. Reflect on theſe eighty thouſand perſons thus annually taken off! There is ſomething in the horror of it, that ſurpaſſes all the bounds of imagination. Admitting that there exiſts in Africa ſomething like to Courts of Juſtice; yet what an office of humiliation and meanneſs is it in us, to take upon ourſelves to carry into execution the partial, the cruel, iniquitous ſentences of ſuch Courts, as if we alſo were ſtrangers to all religion, and to the firſt principles of juſtice. But that country, it is ſaid, has

has been in ſome degree civilized, and civilized by us. It is ſaid they have gained ſome knowledge of the principles of juſtice. What, Sir, have they gained principles of juſtice from *us?* Is their civilization brought about by us!!!—Yes, we give them enough of our intercourſe to convey to them the means, and to initiate them in the ſtudy of mutual deſtruction. We give them juſt enough of the forms of juſtice to enable them to add the pretext of legal trials to their other modes of perpetrating the moſt atrocious iniquity. We give them juſt enough of European improvements, to enable them the more effectually to turn Africa into a ravaged wilderneſs. Some evidences ſay, that the Africans are addicted to the practice of gambling; that they even ſell their wives and children, and ultimately themſelves. Are theſe then the legitimate ſources of Slavery? Shall we pretend that we can thus acquire an honeſt right to exact the labour of theſe people? Can we pretend that we have a right to carry away to diſtant regions, men of whom we know nothing by authentic inquiry, and of whom there is every reaſonable preſumption to think, that thoſe who ſell them to us, have no right to do ſo. But the evil does not ſtop here. I feel that there is not time for me to make all the remarks which the ſubject deſerves, and I refrain from attempting to enumerate half the dreadful conſequences of this ſyſtem. Do you think nothing of the ruin and the miſeries in which ſo many other individuals, ſtill remaining in Africa, are involved in conſequence of carrying off ſo many myriads of people? Do you think nothing of their families which are left behind? Of the connections which are broken? Of the friendſhips, attachments, and relationſhips that are burſt aſunder? Do you think nothing of the miſeries in conſequence, that are felt from generation to generation? Of the privation of that happineſs which might be communicated to them by the introduction of civilization, and of mental and moral improvement? A happineſs which you with-hold from them ſo long as you permit the Slave Trade to continue. What do you yet know of the internal ſtate of Africa? You have carried on a Trade to that quarter of the globe from this civilized and enlightened country; but ſuch a trade, that inſtead of diffuſing either knowledge, or wealth, it has been the check to every laudable purſuit. Inſtead of any fair interchange of commodities; inſtead of

conveying

conveying to them from this highly favoured land, any means of improvement, you carry with you that noxious plant by which every thing is withered and blasted; under whose shade nothing that is useful or profitable to Africa will ever flourish or take root. Long as that continent has been known to navigators, the extreme line and boundaries of its coasts is all with which Europe is yet become acquainted; while other countries in the same parallel of latitude through a happier system of intercourse have reaped the blessings of a mutually beneficial commerce. But as to the whole interior of that Continent you are, by your own principles of commerce, as yet entirely shut out: Africa is known to you only in its skirts. Yet even there you are able to infuse a poison that spreads its contagious effects from one end of it to the other, which penetrates to its very centre, corrupting every part to which it reaches. You there subvert the whole order of nature; you aggravate every natural barbarity, and furnish to every man living on that Continent, motives for committing, under the name and pretext of Commerce, acts of perpetual violence and perfidy against his neighbour.

Thus, Sir, has the perversion of British commerce carried misery instead of happiness to one whole quarter of the globe. False to the very principles of trade, misguided in our policy, and unmindful of our duty, what astonishing—I had almost said, what *irreparable* mischief, have we brought upon that Continent!——I would apply this thought to the present question—How shall we ever repair this mischief? How shall we hope to obtain, if it be possible, forgiveness from Heaven for those enormous evils we have committed, if we refuse to make use of those means which the mercy of Providence hath still reserved to us for wiping away the guilt and shame with which we are now covered. If we refuse even this degree of compensation, if knowing the miseries we have caused, we refuse even now to put a stop to them, how greatly aggravated will be the guilt of Great Britain! and what a blot will the history of these transactions for ever be in the history of this country! Shall we then DELAY to repair these injuries, and to begin rendering this justice to Africa? *Shall we not count the days and hours* that are suffered to intervene and to delay the accomplishment of such a work? Reflect what an immense

object

object is before you — what an object for a nation to have in view, and to have a proſpect, under the favour of Providence, of being now permitted to attain! I think the Houſe will agree with me in cheriſhing the ardent wiſh to enter without delay, upon the meaſures neceſſary for theſe great ends; and I am ſure that the immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade is the firſt, the principal, the moſt indiſpenſable act of policy, of duty, and of juſtice, that the Legiſlature of this country has to take, if it is indeed their wiſh to ſecure thoſe important objects to which I have alluded, and which we are bound to purſue by the moſt ſolemn obligations.

There is, however, one argument ſet up as an univerſal anſwer to every thing that can be urged on our ſide; whether we addreſs ourſelves to Gentlemens underſtandings, or to their hearts and conſciences. It is neceſſary I ſhould remove this formidable objection; for though not often ſtated in diſtinct terms, I fear it is one which has a very wide influence. The Slave Trade ſyſtem, it is ſuppoſed, has taken ſo deep root in Africa, that it is abſurd to think of its being eradicated; and the Abolition of that ſhare of trade carried on by Great Britain (and eſpecially if her example is not followed by other powers) is likely to be of very little ſervice. Give me leave to ſay in anſwer to ſo dangerous an argument, that we ought to be extremely ſure indeed of the aſſumption on which it reſts, before we venture to rely on its validity; before we decide that an evil which we ourſelves contribute to inflict is incurable, and on that very plea, refuſe to deſiſt from bearing our part in the ſyſtem which produces it. You are not ſure, it is ſaid, that other nations will give up the trade, if you ſhould renounce it. I anſwer, if this trade is as criminal as it is aſſerted to be, or if it has in it a thouſandth part of the criminality, which I, and others, after thorough inveſtigation of the ſubject, charge upon it; GOD forbid that we ſhould heſitate in determining to relinquiſh ſo iniquitous a traffic; even though it ſhould be retained by other countries. GOD forbid, however, that we ſhould fail to do our utmoſt towards inducing other countries to abandon a bloody commerce which they have probably been in good meaſure led by our example to purſue. GOD forbid that we ſhould be capable of wiſhing to arrogate to ourſelves the glory of being ſingular in renouncing it!

I tremble

I tremble at the thought of Gentlemens indulging themſelves in this argument (an argument as pernicious as it is futile) which I am combating. "We are friends," ſay they, "to humanity. We are ſecond to none of you in our zeal for "the good of Africa,—but the French will not aboliſh,—the "Dutch will not aboliſh. We wait therefore on prudential "principles till they join us, or ſet us an example."

How, Sir! Is this enormous evil ever to be eradicated, if every nation is thus prudentially to wait till the concurrence of all the world ſhall have been obtained?—Let me remark too, that there is no nation in Europe that has, on the one hand, plunged ſo deeply into this guilt as Britain; or that is ſo likely, on the other, to be looked up to as an example, if ſhe ſhould have the manlineſs to be the firſt in decidedly renouncing it. But, Sir, does not this argument apply a thouſand times more ſtrongly in a contrary way? How much more juſtly may *other* nations point to *us*, and ſay, "Why ſhould we aboliſh "the Slave Trade, when Great Britain has not aboliſhed?—"Britain, free as ſhe is, juſt and honourable as ſhe is, and "deeply alſo involved as ſhe is in this commerce above all "nations, not only has not aboliſhed, *but has refuſed to* "*aboliſh.*—She has inveſtigated it well; ſhe has gained the "completeſt inſight into its nature and effects; ſhe has col-"lected volumes of evidence on every branch of the ſubject. "Her Senate has deliberated—has deliberated again and "again—and what is the reſult? She has gravely and ſolemnly "determined *to ſanction the Slave Trade.* She ſanctions it at "leaſt for a while—her Legiſlature therefore, it is plain, ſees "no guilt in it, and has thus furniſhed us with the ſtrongeſt "evidence that ſhe can furniſh,—of the juſtice unqueſtionably, "—and of the policy alſo, in a certain meaſure and in certain "caſes at leaſt, of permitting this traffick to continue."

This, Sir, is the argument with which we furniſh the other Nations of Europe, if We again refuſe to put an end to the Slave Trade. Inſtead therefore of imagining, that by chuſing to preſume on their continuing it, we ſhall have exempted ourſelves from guilt, and have transferred the whole criminality to them; let us rather reflect that on the very principle urged againſt us, we ſhall henceforth have to anſwer for *their* crimes, as well as our own. We have ſtrong reaſons to believe that it depends upon us, whether other

countries

countries will perſiſt in this bloody trade or not. Already we have ſuffered one year to paſs away, and now that the queſtion is renewed, a propoſition is made for *gradual*, with the view of preventing *immediate* abolition. I know the difficulty that exiſts in attempting to reform long-eſtabliſhed abuſes; and I know the danger ariſing from the argument in favour of delay, in the caſe of evils which nevertheleſs are thought too enormous to be borne, when conſidered as perpetual. But by propoſing ſome other period than the preſent, by preſcribing ſome condition, by waiting for ſome contingency, or by refuſing to proceed till a thouſand favourable circumſtances unite together; perhaps until we obtain the general concurrence of Europe; (a concurrence which I believe never yet took place at the commencement of any one improvement in policy or in morals) year after year eſcapes, and the moſt enormous evils go unredreſſed. We ſee this abundantly exemplified, not only in public, but in private life. Similar obſervations have been often applied to the caſe of *perſonal* reformation. If you go into the ſtreet it is a chance but the firſt perſon who croſſes you is one, "Vivendi recte qui prorogat horam." We may wait; we may delay to croſs the ſtream before us, till it has run down; but we ſhall wait for ever, for the river will ſtill flow on, without being exhauſted. We ſhall be no nearer the object which we profeſs to have in view, ſo long as the ſtep, which alone can bring us to it, is not taken. Until the actual, the only remedy is applied, we ought neither to flatter ourſelves that we have as yet thoroughly laid to heart the evil we affect to deplore; nor that there is as yet any reaſonable aſſurance, of its being brought to an actual termination.

It has alſo been occaſionally urged, that there is ſomething in the diſpoſition and nature of the Africans themſelves, which renders all proſpect of civilization on that continent extremely unpromiſing. "It has been known" (ſays Mr. Frazer, in his evidence) "that a boy has been put to death, who was refuſed to be purchaſed as a ſlave." This ſingle ſtory was deemed by that Gentleman a ſufficient proof of the barbarity of the Africans, and of the inutility of aboliſhing the Slave Trade. My Honourable Friend, however, has told you, that this boy had previouſly run away from his maſter three ſeveral times; that the maſter had to pay his value according

to the cuſtom of his country, every time he was brought back; and that partly from anger at the boy for running away ſo frequently, and partly to prevent a ſtill further repetition of the ſame expenſe, he determined to put him to death.—Such was the explanation of the ſtory given in the croſs examination. This, Sir, is the ſignal inſtance that has been dwelt upon of African barbarity—This *African*, we admit, was *unenlightened*, and altogether barbarous: but let us now aſk what would a *civilized* and *enlightened Weſt Indian*, or a body of Weſt Indians, have done in any caſe of a parallel nature?—I will quote you, Sir, a law, paſſed in the Weſt Indies, in the year 1722, which, in turning over the book I happened juſt now to caſt my eye upon; by which law, this very ſame crime of running away, is, by the legiſlature of the iſland—by the grave and deliberate ſentence of that enlightened legiſlature, *puniſhed with death*: and this, not in the caſe only, of the *third* offence, but even in the very *firſt* inſtance. It is enacted "that if any Negro, or other ſlave ſhall with-"draw himſelf from his maſter, for the term of ſix months; "or any ſlave that was abſent, ſhall not return within that time, "it ſhall be adjudged felony, and every ſuch perſon ſhall ſuffer "death." There is alſo another Weſt Indian law, by which every Negro's hand is armed againſt his fellow-negroes, by his being authorized to kill a runaway Slave, and even having a reward held out to him for doing ſo. Let the Houſe now contraſt the two caſes. Let them aſk themſelves which of the two exhibits the greater barbarity?—Let them reflect, with a little *candor* and *liberality*, whether on the ground of any of thoſe facts, and looſe inſinuations as to the ſacrifices to be met with in the evidence, they can poſſibly reconcile to themſelves the excluding of Africa from all means of civilization? Whether they can poſſibly vote for the continuance of the Slave Trade upon the principle, that the Africans have ſhewn themſelves to be a race of *incorrigible barbarians?*

I hope, therefore, we ſhall hear no more of the moral impoſſibility of civilizing the Africans, nor have our underſtandings and conſciences again inſulted, by being called upon to ſanction the Slave Trade, until other nations ſhall have ſet the example of aboliſhing it. While we have been deliberating upon the ſubject, one nation, not ordinarily taking the lead in politics, nor by any means remarkable for the boldneſs

of

of its councils, has determined on a gradual Abolition; a determination, indeed, which, ſince it permits for a time the exiſtence of the Slave Trade, would be an unfortunate pattern for our imitation. France, it is ſaid, will take up the Trade, if we relinquiſh it. What? Is it ſuppoſed that in the preſent ſituation of St. Domingo, of an Iſland which uſed to take three-fourths of all the Slaves required by the Colonies of France, ſhe, of all countries, will think of taking it up? What countries remain? The Portugueſe, the Dutch, and the Spaniards. Of thoſe countries let me declare it is my opinion, that if they ſee us renounce the Trade, after full deliberation, they will not be diſpoſed, even on principles of policy, to ruſh further into it.—But I ſay more: How are they to furniſh the *Capital* neceſſary for carrying it on? If there is any aggravation of our guilt, in this wretched buſineſs, greater than another, it is that we have *ſtooped* to be the carriers of theſe miſerable beings from Africa to the Weſt Indies for all the other powers of Europe. And now, Sir, if we retire from the Trade altogether, I aſk, Where is that fund which is to be raiſed at once by other nations, equal to the purchaſe of 30 or 40,000 Slaves? A fund, which if we rate them at 40l. or 50l. each, cannot make a capital of leſs than a million and a half, or two millions of money. From what branch of their commerce is it that theſe European nations will draw together a fund to *feed this monſter?—To keep alive this deteſtable commerce?*—And even if they ſhould make the attempt, will not that immenſe Chaſm, which muſt inſtantly be created in the other parts of their trade, from which this vaſt capital muſt be withdrawn in order to ſupply the Slave Trade, be filled up by yourſelves?—Will not theſe branches of commerce which they muſt leave, and from which they muſt withdraw their induſtry and their capitals, in order to apply them to the Slave Trade, be then taken up by Britiſh merchants?—Will you not even in this caſe, find your capital flow into theſe deſerted channels?—Will not *your* capital be turned from the Slave Trade to that natural and innocent commerce from which they muſt withdraw their capitals in proportion as they take up the traffick in the fleſh and blood of their fellow-creatures?

The Committee ſees, I truſt, how little ground of objection to our propoſition there is in this part of our adverſaries argument.

Having now detained the Houſe ſo long, all that I will further add, ſhall be on that important ſubject, the civilization of Africa, which I have already ſhewn that I conſider as the leading feature in this queſtion. Grieved am I to think that there ſhould be a ſingle perſon in this country, much more that there ſhould be a ſingle member in the Britiſh Parliament, who can look on the preſent dark uncultivated and uncivilized ſtate of that continent, as a ground for continuing the Slave Trade,—as a ground not only for refuſing to attempt the improvement of Africa, but even for hindering and intercepting every ray of light which might otherwiſe break in upon her,—as a ground for refuſing to her the common chance and the common means, with which other nations have been bleſſed, of emerging from their native barbariſm.

Here, as in every other branch of this extenſive queſtion, the argument of our adverſaries pleads againſt them; for, ſurely, Sir, the preſent deplorable ſtate of Africa, eſpecially when we reflect that her chief calamities are to be aſcribed to us, calls for our generous aid, rather than juſtifies any deſpair on our part of her recovery, and ſtill leſs any further repetition of our injuries.

I will not much longer fatigue the attention of the Houſe; but this point has impreſſed itſelf ſo deeply on my mind, that I muſt trouble the Committee with a few additional obſervations. Are we juſtified, I aſk, on any one ground of theory, or by any one inſtance to be found in the hiſtory of the world, from its very beginning to this day, in forming the ſuppoſition which I am now combating? Are we juſtified in ſuppoſing that the particular practice which we encourage in Africa, of men's ſelling each other for ſlaves, is any ſymptom of a barbariſm that is incurable? Are we juſtified in ſuppoſing that even the practice of offering up human ſacrifices proves a total incapacity for civilization? I believe it will be found (and perhaps much more generally than is ſuppoſed) that both the trade in ſlaves, and the ſtill more ſavage cuſtom of offering human ſacrifices, obtained in former periods, throughout many of thoſe nations which now, by the bleſſings of Providence, and by a long progreſſion of improvements, are advanced the fartheſt in civilization. I believe, Sir, that, if we will reflect an inſtant, we ſhall find that

that this obſervation comes directly home to *our own ſelves*; and that, on the ſame ground on which *we* now are diſpoſed to proſcribe *Africa* for ever, from all poſſibility of improvement, *we ourſelves* might, in like manner, have been proſcribed and for ever ſhut out from all the bleſſings which we now enjoy.

There was a time, Sir, which it may be fit ſometimes to revive in the remembrance of our countrymen, when even human ſacrifices are ſaid to have been offered in this iſland. But I would peculiarly obſerve on this day, for it is a caſe preciſely in point, that *the very practice of the Slave Trade once prevailed among us.* Slaves, as we may read in Henry's Hiſtory of Great Britain, were formerly an *eſtabliſhed article of* OUR *exports.* "Great numbers," he ſays, "were exported like "cattle, from the Britiſh coaſt, and were to be ſeen expoſed "for ſale in the Roman market." It does not diſtinctly appear, by what *means* they were procured; but there was unqueſtionably no ſmall reſemblance, in this particular point, between the caſe of *our anceſtors* and that of the *preſent wretched natives of Africa*—for the hiſtorian tells you that "adultery, "*witchcraft* and debt were probably ſome of the chief ſources "of ſupplying the Roman market with Britiſh Slaves—that "priſoners taken in war were added to the number—and that "there might be among them ſome *unfortunate gameſters* "who, after having loſt all their goods, at length ſtaked "themſelves, their wives, and their children." Every one of theſe ſources of ſlavery has been ſtated, and almoſt preciſely in the ſame terms, to be at this hour a ſource of ſlavery in Africa. And theſe circumſtances, Sir, with a ſolitary inſtance or two of human ſacrifices, furniſh the alleged proofs, that Africa labours under a *natural incapacity* for civilization; that it is enthuſiaſm and fanaticiſm to think that ſhe can ever enjoy the knowledge and the morals of Europe; that Providence never intended her to riſe above a ſtate of barbariſm; that Providence has irrevocably doomed her to be only a nurſery for Slaves for us free and civilized Europeans. Allow of this principle, as applied to Africa, and I ſhould be glad to know why it might not alſo have been applied to ancient and uncivilized Britain. Why might not ſome Roman Senator, reaſoning on the principles of ſome Honourable Gentlemen, and pointing to *Britiſh Barbarians*, have predicted with equal boldneſs

"*There*

" *There* is a people that will never riſe to civilization—*there*
" is a people deſtined never to be free—a people without the
" underſtanding neceſſary for the attainment of uſeful arts;
" depreſſed by the hand of nature below the level of the
" human ſpecies; and created to form a ſupply of Slaves for
" the reſt of the world." Might not this have been ſaid, according to the principles, which we now hear ſtated in all reſpects as fairly and as truly of Britain herſelf, at that period of her hiſtory, as it can now be ſaid by us of the inhabitants of Africa?

We, Sir, have long ſince emerged from barbariſm—we have almoſt forgotten that we were once barbarians—we are now raiſed to a ſituation which exhibits a ſtriking contraſt to every circumſtance, by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterize Africa. There is indeed one thing wanting to complete the contraſt, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting even to this hour as Barbarians; for we continue to this hour a barbarous traffick in Slaves: we continue it even yet in ſpite of all our great and undeniable pretenſions to civilization. We were once as obſcure among the nations of the earth, as ſavage in our manners, as debaſed in our morals, as degraded in our underſtandings, as theſe unhappy Africans are at preſent. But in the lapſe of a long ſeries of years, by a progreſſion ſlow, and for a time, almoſt imperceptible, we have become rich in a variety of acquirements, favoured above meaſure in the gifts of Providence, unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremoſt in the purſuits of philoſophy and ſcience, and eſtabliſhed in all the bleſſings of civil ſociety: We are in the poſſeſſion of peace, of happineſs, and of liberty; we are under the guidance of a mild and beneficent religion; and we are protected by impartial laws, and the pureſt adminiſtration of juſtice: we are living under a ſyſtem of government, which our own happy experience leads us to pronounce, the beſt and wiſeſt which has ever yet been framed; a ſyſtem which has become the admiration of the world. From all theſe bleſſings, we muſt for ever have been ſhut out, had there been any truth in thoſe principles which ſome Gentlemen have not heſitated to lay down as applicable to the caſe of Africa.—Had thoſe principles been true, we ourſelves had languiſhed to this hour in that miſerable ſtate of

ignorance,

ignorance, brutality, and degradation, in which hiſtory proves our anceſtors to have been immerſed. Had other nations adopted theſe principles in their conduct towards us; had other nations applied to Great Britain the reaſoning which ſome of the Senators of this very Iſland now apply to Africa,—ages might have paſſed without our emerging from barbariſm; and we who are enjoying the bleſſings of Britiſh civilization, of Britiſh laws, and Britiſh liberty, might, at this hour, have been little ſuperior, either in morals, in knowledge, or refinement, to the rude inhabitants of the Coaſt of Guinea.

If then we feel that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance, would have been the greateſt calamity which could have befallen us; if we view with gratitude and exultation the contraſt between the peculiar bleſſings we enjoy, and the wretchedneſs of the ancient inhabitants of Britain,—if we ſhudder to think of the miſery which would ſtill have overwhelmed us, had Great Britain continued to the preſent times to be the mart for Slaves to the more civilized nations of the world, through ſome cruel policy of theirs, GOD forbid that *we* ſhould any longer ſubject *Africa* to the ſame dreadful ſcourge, and preclude the light of knowledge, which has reached every other quarter of the globe, from having acceſs to her coaſts.

I truſt we ſhall no longer continue this commerce, to the deſtruction of every improvement on that wide Continent; and ſhall not conſider ourſelves as conferring too great a boon, in reſtoring its inhabitants to the rank of human beings. I truſt we ſhall not think ourſelves too liberal, if, by Aboliſhing the Slave Trade, we give them the ſame common chance of civilization with other parts of the world, and that we ſhall now allow to Africa the opportunity—the hope—the proſpect of attaining to the ſame bleſſings which we ourſelves, through the favourable diſpenſations of Divine Providence, have been permitted, at a much more early period, to enjoy. If we liſten to the voice of reaſon and duty, and purſue this night the line of conduct which they preſcribe, ſome of us may live to ſee a reverſe of that picture, from which we now turn our eyes with ſhame and regret. We may live to behold the Natives of Africa, engaged in the calm occupations of induſtry, in the purſuits of a juſt and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of ſcience and philoſophy breaking in upon their land,

which

which at ſome happy period in ſtill later times may blaze with full luſtre; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illuminate and invigorate the moſt diſtant extremities of that immenſe continent. Then may we hope that even Africa (though laſt of all the quarters of the globe) ſhall enjoy at length in the evening of her days, thoſe bleſſings which have deſcended ſo plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then alſo will Europe, participating in her improvement and proſperity, receive an ample recompenſe for the *tardy* kindneſs, (if kindneſs it can be called) of no longer *hindering* that continent from extricating herſelf out of the darkneſs which, in other more fortunate regions, has been ſo much more ſpeedily diſpelled.

——Nos primus equis oriens afflavit anhelis;
Illic ſera rubens accendit lumina veſper.

Then, Sir, may be applied to Africa, thoſe words originally uſed indeed with a different view:

His demum exactis——————
Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
Fortunatorum nemorum, ſedeſque beatas;
Largior hic campos Æther et lumine veſtit
Purpureo:

It is in this view, Sir,—it is an atonement for our long and cruel injuſtice towards Africa, that the meaſure propoſed by my Honourable Friend moſt forcibly recommends itſelf to my mind. The great and happy change to be expected in the ſtate of her inhabitants, is of all the various and important benefits of the Abolition, in my eſtimation, incomparably the moſt extenſive and important.

I ſhall vote, Sir, againſt the adjournment; and I ſhall alſo oppoſe to the utmoſt every propoſition, which in any way may tend either to prevent, or even to poſtpone for an hour, the total Abolition of the Slave Trade: a meaſure which, on all the various grounds which I have ſtated, we are bound, by the moſt preſſing and indiſpenſable duty, to adopt.

SIR WILLIAM

SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN, Chairman of the Committee, then ſaid, that the Motion originally made, was, " That it is " the opinion of this Committee, that the Trade carried on by " Britiſh ſubjects for the purpoſe of obtaining Slaves on the " Coaſt of Africa, ought to be aboliſhed:" ſince which it had been moved, that the word, " gradually," ſhould be inſerted after the words, " ought to be," and before the word, " aboliſhed;" and that ſince moving the above amendment, a motion had been made for the Chairman now to leave the Chair. The queſtion which he had to put therefore, was, " That the Chairman ſhould now leave the Chair." On which the Committee having divided,

The Ayes were - - - - - -	87
Noes - - - - - - - - - -	234
Majority againſt Mr. Jenkinſon's Motion, that the Chairman ſhould leave the Chair, -	147

SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN then put the Queſtion, that the word, " gradually," ſhould be inſerted in Mr. Wilberforce's Motion. The Committee having divided,

The Ayes, (for inſerting the word " gradually,") were - - -	193
The Noes, (againſt agreeing that the Abolition ſhould be gradual) were	125
Majority in favour of *gradual* Abolition, rather than an *immediate* one, - - - - - -	68

The CHAIRMAN then put the amended Queſtion, viz. " That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the Trade " carried on by Britiſh Subjects for the purpoſe of obtaining " Slaves on the Coaſt of Africa, ought to be gradually " aboliſhed." The Committee having divided,

The Ayes (for a *gradual* Abolition,) were -	230
The Noes (againſt *any* Abolition,) were - -	85
Majority for agreeing to a gradual Abolition, -	145

The Houſe having on the 25th of April reſolved itſelf into the ſame Committee, SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN being in the Chair, the Right Honourable Mr. DUNDAS moved, "That it ſhall not be lawful to import any African Negroes into any Britiſh Colonies or Plantations, in Ships owned or navigated by Britiſh Subjects, at any time after the Firſt Day of January, 1800."

Upon which LORD MORNINGTON moved, as an Amendment, that the year "1793," be ſubſtituted in the place of the year "18 0."

After a long debate, the Committee having divided, the

Ayes in favour of Lord Mornington's amendment were,	109
Noes, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	158
Majority againſt aboliſhing the Slave Trade on January 1, 1793, - - - - - - -	49

On the 28th of April, the Houſe having again reſolved itſelf into the ſame Committee, Mr. BEAUFOY being in the Chair, the Right Honourable Mr. DUNDAS again moved, "That it ſhall not be lawful to import any African Negroes into any Britiſh Colonies or Plantations, in Ships owned or navigated by Britiſh Subjects, at any time after the Firſt Day of January, 1800."

Upon which Lord Mornington moved as an amendment, That the year "1795" be ſubſtituted in the place of the year 1800.

The Committee, after a long debate having divided, the

Ayes, in favour of Lord Mornington's amendment, were	121
Noes, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	161
Majority againſt aboliſhing the Slave Trade in the year 1795, - - - - - - -	40

SIR

Sir Edward Knatchbull then moved, that the year "1796," ſhould be ſubſtituted in the place of the year "1800."

The Committee having divided, the

Ayes, in favour of Sir E. Knatchbull's amendment, were	151
Noes - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	132
Majority in favour of Sir E. Knatchbull's amendment for aboliſhing the Slave Trade on the Firſt of January, 1796, - - - - - - - - -	19

FINIS.

Lately Publiſhed,

The Debate on a Motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, in the Houſe of Commons, on Monday and Tueſday, April 18 and 19, 1791. Reported in Detail. 2d edit. 9d.

An Inquiry into the Cauſes of the Inſurrection of the Negroes in the Iſland of St. Domingo. To which are added, Obſervations of M. Garran-Coulon on the ſame ſubject, read in his abſence by M. Guadet, before the National Aſſembly, 29th Feb. 1792. 6d.

An Eſſay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African. Tranſlated from a Latin Diſſertation, which was honoured with the Firſt Prize in the Univerſity of Cambridge, for the year 1785. Second Edition, with Additions. By the Rev. T. Clarkſon. 3s. boards.

An Eſſay on the Comparative Efficiency of Regulation or Abolition, as applied to the Slave Trade. Shewing that the latter only can remove the Evils to be found in that Commerce. By the Rev. T. Clarkſon, M. A. 1s 6d.

Letters on the Slave Trade, and the State of the Natives in thoſe parts of Africa, which are contiguous to Fort St. Louis and Goree, written at Paris in Dec. 1789, and Jan. 1790, and addreſſed to Mirabeau. By T. Clarkſon. With Plates, 5s. boards.

An Eſſay on the Treatment and Converſion of African Slaves in the Britiſh Sugar Colonies. By the Rev. J. Ramſay, Vicar of Teſton in Kent. 4s. boards.

An Inquiry into the Effects of putting a ſtop to the African Slave Trade, and of granting Liberty to the Slaves in the Britiſh Sugar Colonies. By the Rev. J. Ramſay. 6d.